

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held at The Mowlem Theatre on Friday 11th April 2025

The meeting commenced at 2.30pm 35 members were in attendance. There were no apologies.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome to the Purbeck Society AGM.

Two years ago, we recruited new members to our committee and settled into a routine of monthly meetings with excellent teamwork and sharing of responsibilities. However, we would be delighted if any of you are interested in joining the committee. We would welcome new ideas and would be particularly interested in those who have strong feelings about Planning matters and could help with keeping a check on Planning Applications and participating in responses to new proposals.

TALKS AND WALKS:

We have enjoyed a particularly good year with many fascinating talks and visits and as a result, managed to increase our membership considerably.

The Spring/Summer visits included a Walk around Swanage with Nick Reid, to explore the many D-Day Sites of Interest in the town and along the coast.

On a fine day in June, Afternoon Tea was held at my house, Cliff Cottage where I explained it's history, starting as simple fishermen's sheds and rough dwellings and gradually being gentrified in the mid nineteenth century.

In July we visited the impressive Purbeck Mining Museum close to Norden station which explores the history of the extraction of China clay around Corfe.

In September John Lejeune lead a tour of the remaining buildings at Poole Pottery and talked about the production of ceramic tiles there, followed by the opportunity to get messy with clay.

Our Autumn/Winter talks in the newly refurbished "Studio" at the Mowlem kicked off with Pam White speaking about the World War Two archaeological finds around Studland.

In November, Martin Papworth described his fascinating life as an archaeologist including many important digs in Dorset.

Our Christmas Social took place at the extraordinary Purbeck House Hotel, built by George Burt in 1875. After enjoying a buffet lunch, we were taken on an extensive tour of the building and grounds with curiosities at every turn. These included treasures such as bollards and bits of ancient buildings, brought back to Swanage as ballast in the boats used by Burt who was sending stone from the local quarries to the city by sea.

The New year started with a talk by Gill Clarke, curator of the Russell Cotes exhibition, "Purbeck Art: The Spirit Place" which attracted over 90 attendees.

Equally well received was an excellent talk on the Sea Eagles Project by Imogen Lloyd.

In March speakers from Keir Construction and Wessex Archaeology presented "the Arne Lagoon", an ambitious land reclamation scheme taking place in Poole Harbour, designed to retain and enhance the wonderful habitat for wading birds.

I think you will agree that all these events represented entertaining and vivid snapshots of the history, archaeology, geography and life of Purbeck in the best tradition of the Society. Many thanks for all who plan these programmes and particularly to Karen Delahay. We have an almost complete list of talks and walks planned for the coming year so Watch this Space!

PLANNING MATTERS:

The Society continues to examine and comment on local Planning Applications. Last year I spoke about the situation regarding the **Harrow House** site. A planning application was eventually submitted several months ago but it has not yet been resolved by the Dorset Planning Committee. We were pleased to learn that they had accepted our advice to retain the original Oldfeld School building and convert it to luxury flats but, dismayed to discover that the overall plan include 75 new dwellings, which we rejected as overdevelopment of the site. This site is adjacent to the former Forres School, more recently the **Purbeck View School**, which is now also on the market and may be being considered in conjunction with Harrow House. This opportunity may explain the silence and delays from the developers. We have included this group of buildings in our Survey of Undesignated Heritage Assets and would like to see further retention of some of the existing buildings including the much-loved Chapel. This complicated situation needs to be monitored closely to ensure that Swanage gets a development worthy of these two exceptional sites.

We are also waiting to hear more about Plans for the **Swanage Green Seafront** proposals. I am told that announcements are shortly to be made, and we hope that there will be opportunities for further discussion before the final decision is agreed.

THE SWANAGE LOCAL PLAN:

Karen and I continue to participate with Swanage Town Council on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan. Little progress was made during the disruptions of an election year, but the Plan is now beginning to come together, and a period of public engagement is about to take place in May with a chance to comment on what has been achieved so far. The allocation of possible sites for new housing will be of particular interest but the exact number of dwellings in this area, required by the Government has yet to be revealed. Again, the Purbeck Society needs to monitor this closely and get involved as necessary. The Government has said that Neighbourhood Plans really do matter and will influence their decisions over the allocation of new housing. So, we have had a very busy and varied year, and it looks as though the coming year will be even more eventful.

Thank you for supporting the Purbeck Society and we look forward to seeing you all at the events planned for 2025-26.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A copy of the accounts for the year ended 31.12.24 was issued with the Notice & Agenda

Total income for the year was £1,485.29 Members subscriptions were up by almost £400 on the previous year to £1062.50 Interest received on the savings account was £159.39

Expenses totalled £860.49, including £405 for the hall hire and talk fees and £156 in subscriptions.

A surplus of £624.80 for the year. Funds brought forward at 1.1.26 were £6267.30

There is no proposal to increase the annual membership fees for the current £10 per year.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

At 31.12.24 The Purbeck Society had a total of 105 paid up and honorary members.

It is pleasing that the numbers are back up to previous levels and we look forward to further growing the membership numbers.

Welcome to our new members and thank you to all who have renewed their membership from last year.
Linda Hernandez on behalf of David Churchill.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Existing Officers:

Chair – Jessica Sutcliffe

Vice Chair, Events Secretary & Archives – Karen Delahay

Secretary & Treasurer – Linda Hernandez

Membership Secretary _ David Churchill

Committee Members – Francis Thackway, Pam Smith, Allie Hyett and Chris Greenhough

There were no new nominations. The existing Committee agreed to remain in office.

The formal business of the meeting ended at 2.48pm.