

Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust

NEWSLETTER

Volunteering Special Edition

Fundraising Volunteers Needed!

Since the transfer of ownership of The Swanage Day Centre, Sure Start and Ex-Youth Club buildings in Chapel Lane from Dorset Council to The Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust, the Trust has been busy transforming these buildings into a thriving wellbeing hub – The Focus Centre – that will meet the needs of people in Swanage and the surrounding villages.

A wraparound childcare facility managed by Explorers has been created, serving the needs of more than 70 families. The Trust is starting to refit, refurbish and upgrade The Centre to provide more essential services for parents, children and families.

The previous Day Centre building is also 'work in progress'. Dorset Council currently operates day care services from part of the building while the rest is rented to local service providers (statutory and voluntary) to provide vital support, including mental health, drug and alcohol and dementia support. Much building work is still needed to bring this part of the building into full community life.

A new Focus Centre Community Café needs to be completed, which will operate as a drop-in respite centre and a gathering place for those seeking support and company. Work has started, but £78,000 is still required to enable the Trust to finish that task and help keep the whole complex running efficiently.

Can you help? The Trust urgently requires new volunteers with knowledge and experience in fundraising in particular, to join and work with our existing fundraising team:

- Marketing
- Copywriting
- Social media
- Crowdfunding

This is an exciting community project with enormous potential benefit to our community, why not be part of it. Whether you can spare just an hour or two a week or more, we'd love to hear from you! If you think that you can help, just let me know by email (melvyn.norris@icloud.com)

To find out more about our work, visit <https://wellbeing Swanage.org> and www.sandpdt.org.uk/

Newsletter Coordinator: Mel Norris
Trustee Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust
email: melvyn.norris@icloud.com mobile: 07446 677924

See the Volunteer Supplement and articles throughout the newsletter for more opportunities to volunteer!

find the newsletter at www.sandpdt.org.uk

DEADLINE

for contributions to the April / May 2026 issue of the Newsletter

MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026



Swanage & Purbeck
Development Trust
Charity Reg. No. 1162662

A tireless leading light of three charities in Wareham has been honoured by the High Sheriff of Dorset

Retired marketing executive Harold Forbes is co-founder, chairman and treasurer of Wareham Area Men's Shed; the organiser of the town's litter pickers, known as the Wareham Wombles, and a trustee and treasurer of the Wareham District Development Trust.

He was presented with a High Sheriff's Award "in recognition of great and valuable services to the community" by Dorset's ceremonial dignitary Callum Bremner at a ceremony in the Shed's workshop at Lenctenbury Farm, outside Wareham.

Mr Bremner paid tribute to Harold's "commitment, generosity of spirit and unwavering enthusiasm, which exemplifies voluntary endeavour and civic spirit". The Sheriff also praised his "inspiring personal resilience" given he has continued his voluntary work while also supporting his wife Karin through long and arduous treatment for a serious illness.

Harold said he was "extremely honoured" to receive the award. Asked what drives him to be so involved in the community, he replied: "I guess when you retire you lose a sense of purpose – you don't have the same structure or pressure on you. I find life is better with structure and a bit of purpose. And what's nice is that, as opposed to working, the things I do are hobbies which no one is forcing me to do. They keep me active, keep my brain sharp and challenge my creativity."

Members of the Men's Shed said Harold was known for his keen wit and ready smile.

Retired doctor Philip Dawson, who nominated Harold for the award, added: "We all need leaders at every stage of life, even in retirement. And Harold, with his remarkable ability to combine fine organisation with good humour, is a tremendous example."

Philip Daubeny, chair of the Wareham District Development Trust – which tends parts of the town including Priory Meadow – said: "Harold has been very busy on behalf of Wareham and Purbeck for many years. He is a tremendous asset and thoroughly deserves this award."



Wareham's Shedders at the presentation ceremony with Harold Forbes (centre right) and High Sheriff Callum Bremner (centre left)

Swanage Community Defibrillator Partnership

Keep the heart of Swanage beating



Maintaining and monitoring all the defibs and cabinets within SCDP is a very important task and something that our Partnership takes very seriously ensuring all kit is rescue ready.

An annual return has just been undertaken by Ian Brown who has identified some replacements and upgrades needed to our estate. We will be undertaking the work in coming months and will need to continue our fundraising to support the upgrades. We now support 55 defibrillators across Swanage and the wider area and are delighted that new defibs are being placed in Wareham, 3 in the last month. This is due to the wonderful fundraising undertaken by Alison and Si Colville who have raised so much to place defibs in the Wareham area, (sadly in memory of their son Shaun who went into cardiac arrest after a sudden onset asthma attack).

Staff at Foleys Garage in Harmans Cross have also raised sufficient funds to place a second defib in the village - a great achievement. The defib will be installed soon and will ensure greater coverage in Harmans Cross.

In recent weeks SCDP has loaned defibs to 4 churches in Swanage. These devices are kept within the church buildings and will be available in the event of a church emergency. Each defib has a dedicated guardian who reports back to a coordinator.

In total, since commencing our project 10 years ago, defibs have been deployed 298 times, 3 times over the Christmas period; our busiest defibs are situated at the Swanage Police Station/Town Hall, Coastguard Station and the Railway Station.

Please do continue to support us financially if you can and if anyone would like to become a Defib guardian we will be very pleased to hear from you.

info@swanagedefib.co.uk or through Corbens in Station Rd. Swanage

Sending best wishes

Maggie Hardy, SCDP Steering Group member

Purbeck Sounds is approaching its two-year anniversary. What a journey! We have gone from scratch to building the studio in the heart of Swanage, attracting 21 volunteers from all walks of life, broadcasting 24 hours a day. We remain a non-for-profit organisation with the community at the heart of everything we do. We have increased our output of talk shows so that they now neatly balance our music shows. We attract guests with all sorts of interests and backgrounds. Chris Edward is presenting a music show which has live local musicians, our mid-morning shows with Thelma Deacon, Maggie O'Neil, Karen Grant & Steve Zodiac interview many different local characters from authors to politicians and even famous journalists like Kate Adie and George Monbiot. Our talk shows have taken off and spurred on other initiatives such as the Word's to Inspire workshops and partnerships such as between the museums and the local history show.



Below are some of our presenters: Chris Brady – Book notes, David Wise – Purbeck Wanders, Chris Edward – live music with Purbeck Sounds, Thelma Deacon – Good morning with Thelma, Maggie O'Neil - The Maggie Show, Fiona Sturrock – Breakfast on a Wednesday and Words to Inspire, Pierre Martel – Young Stars and Monday Movie Night, Cathy Phippard – H'our Local History, Karen Grant- Coffee Time



We are very grateful to our partners who support us on this journey. Alan May from Newton Manor Hall who hosted a fund-raising event before Christmas and the artist who performed. We also want to thank the many guests that come on our shows, they are fundamental to the station.

Last year we launched our Listen Again service where you can hear our talk shows at your convenience, it is accessed on the front page of our website. For any of you who wonder how to listen to Purbeck Sounds, you can listen on any device with WIFI, if you use Alexa, the first time you want to hear Purbeck Sounds just say, "Alexa enable Purbeck Sounds" and from then on just ask it to play Purbeck Sounds.

News from Swanage Depression Support

We are a small peer support group for adults experiencing, depression, anxiety or extreme stress, either in themselves or people close to them. We meet fortnightly on Wednesday evenings for confidential sharing and craft activities. Our meetings are usually positive as we share our problems and successes and talk over our lives. We have room for more members! Please get in touch if you are interested and we will arrange an informal meet-up. Alan's contact details are below.



Sadly, Natalie, one of our meeting facilitators, is having to resign due to pressure of work. That leaves us very fragile, so we are anxious to recruit a successor. Facilitators have some experience of depression - their own, in family or friends, or as mental health professionals. They need to be empathetic, good listeners and have skills in overseeing group discussions. Facilitators work in pairs, have time after each session to de-brief and engage in professional supervision sessions, paid for by SDS. Appropriate insurance is in place. Commitment is one or two evenings a month.

If you think this could be you, please contact Alan at swanagedepression@outlook.com (phone 07748 672069) for a chat. We shall require a DBS check, references and an interview.

Free Course in Swanage to help babies move from milk to meals

Starting this January in Swanage, the **'Mush & Munch' Weaning Course** from the Friendly Food Club offers support to parents introducing their baby to solid foods.

Over four Thursday mornings at Herston Village Hall, the free sessions offer practical advice and the chance for parents and caregivers to share stories, experiences and explore together with their little ones in tow! The course has been funded by the Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team.

Said Rachel Tapping, from Wellbeing Swanage, who are organising the course;

“The move from milk to meals is one of the first big adventures you and your child take together. The journey can be really rewarding but can also be an anxious time. The course will help parents create happy, positive food memories from the very start.”

Each 90-minute session is personal, informal, and non-judgmental. Led by a friendly and knowledgeable team, the course focuses on achievable, budget-conscious strategies that align with nutritionist-approved guidance. The course aims to reduce anxiety about feeding, provide a safe environment for children to play with and explore new foods, including key allergenic foods, and equip families with ideas to encourage a wider, healthier diet that sets the foundation for long-term well-being.

Families with young children ready to begin their food adventure are invited to book their free place. Registration can be done online, by calling 01202 057100, or by dropping into the Welcome Lounge at the Focus Centre on Swanage High Street.

For more information visit <https://www.thefriendlyfoodclub.org/>



Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Cake Concerts

are relaxed chamber performances which take place in informal, social environments, combining easy-listening repertoire with refreshments, cake and good company.

BSO Cake Concerts demonstrate the power of music to connect people, rekindle relationships with loved ones, and even recall past experiences. **Specifically developed for people living with dementia**, Cake Concerts are open to everyone, whether living in the community or in care and residential homes. These accessible events ensure everyone can experience the joy of live music.

Performing on flute, harp and cello, the **Teatime Trio** share a selection of works including popular classical hits and light film music, while audience members enjoy refreshments and a slice of cake.



Wed 11th Feb 2026	11:00am	Child Okeford Village Hall, Blandford Forum
Fri 20th Feb 2026	11:00am	Pine Martin Grange, Wareham
Wed 25th Feb 2026	11:00am	Milborne St Andrew Village Hall, Blandford
Thu 5th Mar 2026	11:00am	The Mowlem, Swanage
Wed 11th Mar 2026	11:00am	The Exchange, Sturminster Newton
Wed 18th Mar 2026	11:00am	Woodlands Village Hall

Book at <https://artsreach.co.uk/event/bso-cake-concerts>

Unite for Good

Swanage & Purbeck Rotary launches a Community Projects Breakfast Club

Whether you represent a local business, a charitable organisation or you are simply an individual with a heart for helping others, you are warmly invited. We believe that the best projects start with a great conversation and a friendly atmosphere.

Who are we?

We are Swanage & Purbeck Rotary. Our passion is taking "good ideas" and providing the support, networking and resources needed to turn them into "great projects".

How does it start?

It all starts with a friendly breakfast. No pressure, no stiff formalities, just local people connecting over coffee and a shared goal to do good.

Join us for our first gathering:

- * When: Monday 26th January (and every last Monday of the month);
- * Time: 8:00am to 9:30am;
- * Where: McAllisters, 24 Institute Road, Swanage BH19 1BX - first floor.

Let us save you a seat!

To help the kitchen prepare a warm welcome for you, please email barteklibicki@gmail.com for more details.

We genuinely look forward to meeting you and hearing your ideas.

Celebrate Silver Saturday With Us





**Tea & Cakes on Rotary's Birthday
with
Musical Entertainment**

**Emmanuel Baptist Church
Victoria Avenue, Swanage
Saturday 21st February 2026
At 2.00pm**

**Booking is essential by
Saturday 14th February**

Transport can be arranged with prior notice

**Book your place with
Mo - 07907 728699 or
Sarah - 07971 457931**

**Free of Charge but
Donations taken towards Local Charities**



Swanage & Purbeck
Rotary
Charitable Incorporated
Organisation



Corbens



Rotary YOUNG MUSICIAN COMPETITION
Sunday 8th February 2026



CALLING ALL YOUNG MUSICIANS

Share your gift of song or mastery of a musical instrument and perform live in the annual Rotary Young Musician competition. (Up to the age of 17)

Swanage Methodist Church, from 2pm
All abilities, all solo instruments and vocalists

For rules and entry forms visit:
purbeckyouthmusic.org or snap our QR code:



Christmas Day Meal

Thank you so much to everyone who prayed for and supported this event, which went really well. We entertained around 30 guests with a traditional turkey and Christmas pudding meal, followed by some community singing and a quiz. Unfortunately, people who stayed on missed the King's Speech! We had about 30 helpers, mainly recruited through Swanage Matters, who helped with preparations, cooked, served, washed up and provided lifts. We even had to decline some offers! Adam and Jo Garnish were heroes in the kitchen, but everyone worked well as a team. We were blessed with free use of the URC Hall, Christmas puddings from Love Cake, Hattie Browns ale from Jean and gift bags for everyone from Dorset Mums. This was Swanage community pulling together at its best!



The Room Set Out



Two Satisfied Guests



Helpers Relaxing

There are many older people in Swanage who live alone and are often housebound. That can be very lonely! Swanage Linking Lives is looking for more volunteers to visit for one hour a week. That may seem daunting but it is very rewarding, as people are so grateful and real friendships develop. It is easy to fit one hour a week into even the busiest schedule. The people we visit are very flexible! Please contact Helen on 07495 534171 or email silvolunteers1@gmail.com.



Corfe Community Kitchen Soup 'n Pud

A choice of 2 soups and 2 puddings with custard
Corfe Castle Village Hall

Saturday February 7th '26, 12.30 – 1.45pm

**Come and join local friends for a simple, healthy, filling and sustainable
Free Lunch**



This venture is provided by volunteers, on a not-for-profit basis, in a friendly environment for local residents to increase community spirit. If you wish to make a donation, either of food or money please feel free but it is not obligatory.

In January we were given some more jams and chutneys to sell to help raise our funds a little bit. Thank you so much to whoever crept in to donate them before we arrived! We will have them on sale again this month. Despite the cold weather we had a good turnout for our January lunch and the diners found the seasonal borscht, squash and lentil soups followed by clementine upside down and bread and butter puddings very warming. The bulb planted up tea cups looked very pretty on the tables and sold well. Many thanks Lizzie.

We are looking forward to February with snow drops appearing and slightly longer days! For Soup 'n' Pud we are finishing off the amazing squash we were given in another tasty soup followed by our usual very satisfying puddings and custard.

We are always so grateful for the help and support we get from our volunteers without whom we would be unable to function. However we are always happy to welcome more into the fold as well as additional diners

Looking ahead we are already planning another fund raising event for the Village Hall kitchen which is in dire need of updating to improve both its usefulness and its safety levels and we will keep you posted on these in the future.

Once again we must thank The Village Bakery for donating the bread rolls and also all the lovely folk that donate food and money to the cause. It really helps us ring the menu changes and to follow our aim of using up food that might otherwise have gone to waste.

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE SOUP 'N' PUD A TRY?

Why Volunteering at The Focus Centre Changes Lives (Including Yours)!

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to be part of a volunteering team? We spoke with Phil, one of our dedicated volunteers, to explore the real experience of giving time at The Focus Centre. His story isn't just about volunteering—it's about connection, purpose, and discovering how even a single hour a week can ripple outward in powerful ways.

The Spark: Why Get Involved?

Phil moved to Swanage less than a year ago, already familiar with the rewards of volunteering. *"I saw an advert outside the Focus Centre looking for community connectors and decided to attend the initial meeting. The talk about the future ideas for the centre and the holistic approach was exciting and I wanted to be involved in any way I was needed."*

That spark—that moment of thinking, "I can be part of this"—is where many of our volunteers begin. It's the vision of a hub where no one falls through the cracks, where support is warm, professional, and truly holistic.

The Heart of What We Do

Phil quickly understood the unique role our centre plays in Swanage: *"Swanage is geographically quite isolated, particularly for those who rely on public transport, so the Focus Centre provides a central base from where a wide range of organisations can operate. It offers a calm sanctuary where individuals are heard and supported by the professional and passionate staff."*

This isn't just a building. It's the heart of the community. It's where the incredible work of organisations like the Family Hub, Lewis Manning, Help & Care and Reach, CAMHS, and baby groups, Homestart Wessex, Child Speech and Language and Depression Support becomes accessible to everyone. And volunteers are the warm, welcoming heart of it all.

You Are Never Alone: Training and Support

Worried you might not have the right skills or experience? Phil's training put him at ease: *"The training I received was thorough... It made me realise that, for many people, just coming into the Welcome Lounge for the first time was a huge initial step. My training focused on providing an environment where an individual, whatever their concern or struggle, was given the time, space and privacy to talk freely."*

You'll learn active listening, how to use our extensive local services database, and most importantly, you'll always be supported. A professional staff member is always present alongside volunteers—you're part of a team.

The Reward: Moments That Matter

For Phil, the deepest rewards come in quiet, meaningful connections: *"A conversation developed with one gentleman about the term mental health and if it was an appropriate label for people. He has returned several times to continue the discussion... If I have been, in any small way, involved in helping him, it would make me very happy but also humbled."*

This is the real magic: the human moments. The respectful conversation, the simple act of making space for someone to be heard - It changes their day—and often, it changes yours.



Your Skills Are Needed Here

While Phil shines in our Welcome Lounge, your unique talents are needed and valued across our hub. We have a whole spectrum of opportunities, from digital connections to behind-the-scenes champions:

- Website Support
- Social Media Guru
- Video and Photography
- Fundraising
- Admin
- Research
- Marketing
- Decorating

Phil's advice to anyone thinking about it?

"I would strongly recommend giving it a go. There is a whole range of different ways your skills can be used... The commitment is anything from one hour or more per week (and is always flexible) and shows that you can make a difference in your community with even a small amount of time."

Ready to Write Your Own Story? If Phil's journey resonates with you—if you feel that spark to connect, to help, or to offer your skills to a truly vital community cause—we would love to hear from you. You don't need to be an expert. You just need to be you.

Get in touch with Rachel, our Hub Coordinator, to start a conversation.

Email: rachel.tapping@sandpdt.org.uk

Phone: 01929 208 376

Pop in: The Focus Centre, 107 High Street, Swanage, BH19 2NB

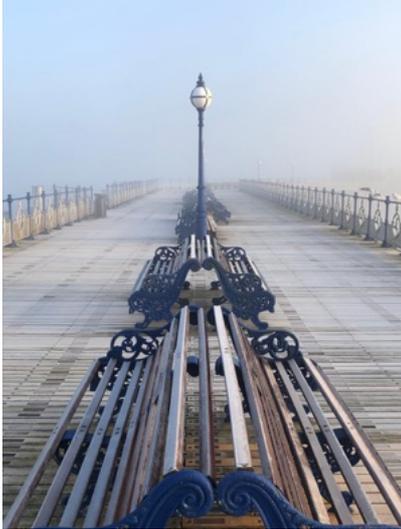


VOLUNTEER WITH US



Swanage Pier Update

As we welcome the New Year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect and share our heartfelt gratitude with everyone who supported the Pier in 2025. Whether you made a donation, joined us at an event, or simply enjoyed a stroll, a spot of fishing, or a dive, the Pier continues to thrive because of you.



Swanage Pier Quiz Night – Thursday 26th February

Join us at the British Legion for a fun evening of quizzing in support of Swanage Pier. Expect a mix of general knowledge, local trivia and plenty of laughs, all while helping to preserve our muchloved landmark.

Bring a team or join one on the night — everyone's welcome. Full details visit - www.swanagepiertrust.com/events

New Years Resolution

A New Year's resolution you can actually keep is becoming a Friend of Swanage Pier. It's a simple way to support the Pier while enjoying regular walks along it throughout the year. Your membership helps maintain this muchloved local landmark and gives you another good reason to pop down for some fresh air and sea views.

A year's membership costs a modest £27 per person or £50.00 for a joint annual membership (for two people living at the same address).

For full details and how to join visit - www.swanagepiertrust.com/friends-of-swanage-pier

Are you getting married in 2026 ?

Swanage Pier offers a beautifully unique setting for a wedding, combining sweeping sea views with the charm of its historic Victorian architecture. The Pier's stunning coastal location provides an unforgettable backdrop that elevates every moment of your ceremony. Whether you're planning something intimate or a larger celebration, it's a memorable and distinctive place to say "I do."

Come and chat with us at The Big Bomo Wedding Show at the Bournemouth Pavilion on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th March. For full information on getting married on Swanage Pier, visit: www.swanagepiertrust.com/Weddings.aspx

Visit our website or follow us on social media to find out about all our events and activities happening in 2026.



Swanage Food Bank

New Year Update

We are extremely grateful for all the food and financial donations over the Christmas period. THANK YOU to so many private donors, schools, churches, local businesses and village halls for your generosity.

During 2025 we were able to help 539 households (784 adults and 410 children) in Swanage who needed extra support.

As our store cupboard stands at the moment, we currently don't need any more pasta, baked beans or soup!

If you would like to contribute to our stores, tins of cold meat (ham, corned beef), tins of hot meals (chicken/beef curry), fruit in jelly and tinned fruit are always welcome. Please keep an eye on 'use-by' and 'best before' dates as we can only supply food that is in-date.

Remember, if you need occasional help from the food bank, please self-refer by phoning us on 07759 230313. If you need more frequent or ongoing help, please get a referral from an agency that is aware of your circumstances - like Citizens Advice, your Social Worker, Mental Health Worker, the Focus Centre, your GP or a church minister.

The food bank is usually open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 12-2pm at the United Reformed Church, High Street, BH19 2NY. If you need our help, please call us in the morning on those days to arrange a food parcel and collection time.

And finally - If you want to make some new friends, while learning to cook cheap, healthy and tasty meals, why not join the Friendly Food Club at the URC, High Street, Swanage. This fun, friendly, free course has a new series on Thursday mornings from 26th February - 2nd April. You can book your place here: www.thefriendlyfoodclub.org or call 01202 057100. Everything is provided (donations welcomed) and carers and support workers are also welcome to come along.

Thank you!

February 2026 at HXVH



HARMANS CROSS VILLAGE HALL

A very full couple of months coming up at Harmans Cross Village Hall so please read on

Movie Night – Tuesday 10 February Juror no2

Justin gets picked for jury duty but he's going to have a difficult time of it. Firstly, his pregnant wife might deliver their child before he even gets a chance to deliver a verdict. And to make matters more complicated, it transpires that he alone knows the defendant accused of murder is innocent. How? Because Justin is the guilty party!! Driving at night in a rainstorm, Justin had hit what he believed was a deer – but which he only now realises was a woman making her way home on foot after a public screaming match with her boyfriend, who now stands in the dock accused of murder. Justin finds himself struggling with a serious moral dilemma ... one he could use to sway the jury verdict and potentially convict - or free - the accused killer. A thrilling film brilliantly directed by Clint Eastwood at the tender age of 94!!!

Please go to our website at <https://www.harmanscrosshall.co.uk/Movie-Nights/> to read a review or click on the trailer. Entry is just £6 with doors and bar open from 7pm.

Live Music

For more information and access to tickets for our live music events, please go to the Special Events page of our website at <https://www.harmanscrosshall.co.uk/Special-Events/>

Saturday 7 March – Swing into Spring with the Purbeck Big Band

Purbeck WI are bringing the Purbeck Big Band to Harmans Cross. Tickets £12.50 available from Jackie Fuggle at Purbeck WI or through email at purbeckbigband@gmail.com

Saturday 14 March – Pop-Up David Bowie

Super talented local Swanage artist Paul Antony is an award-winning Bowie tribute act and he's coming to Harmans Cross Village Hall with his fantastic Pop-Up Bowie concert. Tickets available on our HXVH website through Ticketsource at just £13.00. Doors and bar open at 7pm

Stalls at the Hall – Saturday 14 March

Homemade delights, crafts and curios plus coffee and conversation with the amazing array of home baked HX cakes. Browse, buy and chat from 9.30am to Noon. Free parking and entry. To book a table, contact Bethani at the Hall (see details below).

Other regular dates:

Coffee Junction

Thursday 5 and 19 February, and 5 and 19 March, from 10.30am for coffee and conversation – everyone welcome.

HXVH Church

Sunday 15 February and Sunday 15 March at 6pm – a very friendly, informal and happy service for anyone and everyone.

And Finally - Hall Bookings

A reminder that if anyone has an interest in hiring the hall for events – either occasional or regular - then please contact our fabulous new Bookings Guru, Bethani Rawlings. Please email Bethani at either bethanirawlings.hxvh@gmail.com or at bookings@harmanscrosshall.co.uk The Hall's mobile number continues to be 07384 848419

Alison and the HXVH Committee



Shanty Notes from the Wareham Whalers



Stan Hugill(Sailortown):

"From the fact that most of these women wore white stockings, and the Jack Tars wore none, came the cry, it is said, of the bosun's mate when awakening the hands: 'Rise 'n' shine! Show a leg there!' If a white-clad leg appeared, the occupant of the bunk or hammock was allowed to sleep on; if a naked, hairy leg then it was 'Up on deck, ye port Mabon lubber!'"

William Doeflinger (Shantymen and Shantyboys):

"Until his advance, which usually went to his boarding master, had been worked off, the old-time sailorman felt he was 'working to pay for a dead horse.' ...

In British ships the day the 'dead horse' was worked off was observed more formally. At one bell in the second dogwatch the crew marched out of the forecastle dragging a scarecrow horse made of an old barrel or canvas stuffed with straw. They paraded around the main deck to the alleyway door, where all hands had a shot of rum or whisky. To the singing of the halyard shanty that follows, the 'dead horse' was swayed up to the lee main yard arm. Cut adrift, it fell into the sea and floated off astern."

In the 19th century, shanties were influenced greatly by the increase in the numbers of black sailors who brought with them a rich tradition of singing whilst working. A number of shanties were collected from one particular black shanty man known as **Lemon Curtis**. One of these shanties, 'Rise Me Up From Down Below' is unusual in that it combines both halyard lines and stamp and go lines. Curtis taught it to a fellow sailor called Barker.

Lemon Curtis came to an unfortunate end. In bitter weather off the Horn, he was up the icy rigging to help furl the mainsail.

"Clad in thin dungarees and cotton shirt, he was aloft for what seemed ages of struggle, fighting the frozen bucking sail as he and his shipmates strove to lash it securely with the gaskets. Shortly after setting his numbed feet on deck, Curtis was taken by some internal seizure and staggered to his bunk in the flooded forecastle. Barker relayed to the hard-case captain the stricken sailor's request for a drop of brandy. That plea was refused. At midnight a canvas-shrouded form was borne onto the poop deck. The csptaon 'mumbled a few words of prayer and that which had been Lemon Curtis was committed to the depths of the lonely Cape Horn sea'"



"During the first days of a voyage the mates often had to subdue drunken sailormen and show would-be troublemakers who was running the watch. They had to ensure that shanghaied greenhorns learned the ropes fast, before they endangered ship and crew. Discipline was strict and was often enforced with fists and belaying pins."

Henry Dana, Jr. was a raw Harvard law graduate in 1834 when he walked up the gangplank of the *Pilgrim*, a brigantine sailing out of Boston on the hazardous voyage around Cape Horn that would bring him five months later to California. Dana had joined the ship as an ordinary seaman in an attempt to recover his health and eyesight. Reading the law had become impossible after an attack of measles, and the doctor's somewhat drastic advice had been to spend some time at sea as a curative.

Dana's experience, recounted in his book, *Two Years before the Mast*, is a classic account of on-the-job learning.

Six days shalt thou labor and do all thou art able; And on the seventh, holystone the decks, and scrape the cable.

Rats were always a big problem on board sailing ships. They not only attacked supplies but could also cause damage by gnawing timbers. Laura Smith, an early collector of shanties, wrote in 1888 about a cunning Welsh captain who had a novel solution. She records:

"He was lying in the Mersey, and learning there was a vessel laden with cheese in the basin, he drew alongside her at dusk, left all his hatches open and when the rats were safely on board of thatcheese laden ship, he moved off."

The Royal Navy also had great concerns about rats on board ships. Rear-Admiral Beaufort of the *HMS Woolwich*, for example, was one morning awoken by the disturbing sensation of 'the cold nose of a rat licking his lips', who scurried away 'firmly between the timbers'. They employed a variety of methods in the 19th century to control rats, including the use of rat catchers. The most famous one was Jack Black who was employed on board *HMS Worcester*. He was, however, used on many other ships.

Laura Smith also records some of the **sailors superstitions**(of which there were many)

- It is a bad sign if a water bucket or mop is lost at sea.
- No one must cut his hair or nails at sea, except during a storm. Thus a calm voyage would return a crew whose fingers would be formidable weapons to encounter and whose lockswould be suggestive of Rip Van Winkle or Robinson Crusoe."

The Friends of Wareham Hospital



We are delighted to say that our Christmas raffle, which was drawn on 19th December '25, has raised £635 for our funds. A fantastic result thanks to some wonderful donated prizes and generous support from those who purchased tickets.

We will be actively fundraising this year to continue to replace funds used to support the transfer of the Community Mental Health team to the hospital site - a move which has been so well received by staff and patients.

We have been pleased to continue support for Lewis Manning by sending a donation of £250. Lewis Manning provides care to those in our local community who have life limiting conditions but who are encouraged to live life to the full.



We continue our quest to attract new trustees to join our Friends committee and would welcome enquiries from anyone who would like to help us support Wareham Hospital and Purbeck services. Please do contact me through the hospital if you would like more information 01929 557550

Also if you would like to join our Friends gardening team please do get in touch. We meet weekly, when weather permits, for a couple of hours on a Tuesday morning enjoying the significant changes we have been able to make to the garden which is valued and appreciated by patients, visitors and staff and enjoying spending time together. We are also registered through the Wareham Community Growers Group to take part in the 'Its your Neighbourhood -In Bloom' competition so we will soon be working hard to prepare the garden for future judging by a member of the RHS .

Sending best wishes and grateful thanks to all.

Maggie Hardy, Friends Chair

Dorset hosts powerful new Migration Festival at Careys Secret Garden this winter

Careys Secret Garden in Wareham will become the centre of a unique new cultural event this winter as it launches **Migration Festival 2026: Radical Friendship** from **30 January to 1 February**.

Set in the much-loved Dorset gardens, the three-day festival brings together **art, film, comedy, food and live talks** to explore migration as a shared human experience — with a strong local and community focus. The programme includes international artists alongside Dorset-based groups such as the **Portland Global Friendship Group**, which supports people seeking sanctuary in the county.

Highlights include a striking **Migration Art Gallery**; a **Love Welcomes** exhibition and ethical pop-up shop showcasing work made by refugee women in Ukraine, Lebanon and the West Bank; and a Saturday night **comedy show** headlined by **Prince Abdi**, featuring performers from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Families are welcomed too, with events like the **Buzztastic Bee Walkabout**, creative workshops, Ethiopian cooking sessions and a Sunday afternoon screening of the award-winning animated film **Flow**, a story about friendship and finding home.

Festival organisers say Radical Friendship is about showing how **Dorset communities are already playing a role in welcoming people from around the world**, and how creativity can help people connect across difference.

The festival takes place just outside Wareham (BH20 7PG), a short walk from the train station, and runs across Careys Secret Garden's galleries, gardens and marquee spaces.

Tickets start from £10.

More information can be found at [Events – Careys Secret Garden](#)



Updates from the National Trust



Remarkable resurgence of wildlife

Five years after the creation of the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR) – volunteers have revealed a remarkable resurgence of wildlife. At the AGM of the Purbeck Natural History Forum, speakers presented the highlights of 2025's wildlife monitoring:



Photo: Dartford warbler, Paul Wright

- Dartford warblers have reached a record 97 breeding pairs at Arne, an extraordinary recovery for a species that was almost extinct in the UK in the 1960s.
- Silver-studded blue butterflies on the Studland heaths saw their highest ever counts in 2024 and 2025. This is in a time of national butterfly decline.
- A nationally rare ground beetle, famed for its iridescent green and gold colouring, is thriving on Hartland Moor.
- Water voles, an endangered species, have been recorded on several sites on the heaths.
- Pine martens, critically endangered in England, have been recorded for the first time at Little Sea.

Read more here: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/dorset/spyway/remarkable-wildlife-resurgence-on-purbeck-heaths

Cleaning the dragons' teeth!

If you go down to Middle Beach, Studland, you can't miss the WW2 dragons' teeth, standing proud after a clean-up by the Trust's new Youth Volunteering Group. As their first active conservation task with us, the youngsters cleared the thick bramble and bracken that was covering the anti-tank defences. The group is made up of environmentally conscious 12 to 17-year-olds from Purbeck, Swanage and Lytchett Matravers schools. Working outside of school hours, they will gain practical experience in countryside management, enabling them to explore conservation as a potential career path. If you know any youngsters who might like to join the group, please email purbeck@nationaltrust.org.uk.



Photo: Jill Bailey

Fabulous flocks

It might seem bleak outside, but February is a fabulous time for birdwatching. The farmland and hedgerows are bursting with flocks of goldfinch, linnet and yellowhammer. Also look out for the so-called 'Viking birds', winter-visiting thrushes from Scandinavia. They feast on berries in scrub and worms in the fields. Redwings, with their striking white eye stripe and rusty-red underwings, often gather in large flocks. Fieldfares are bigger, grey and chestnut-coloured with a yellowy-toned breast. They aggressively defend their food, chasing away any other birds that get too close. Of course, the harbour is awash with overwintering birds. Have you seen the large flocks of dark-bellied brent geese on the shoreline? Visitors from Siberia, they spend the winter feeding on seagrass, algae and saltmarsh plants.

Middle Beach's history revealed

As predicted, change is happening fast to the shoreline at Middle Beach now that the sea defences have been removed. The result is that a new sandy cliff is forming, and we have gained about one metre of height across the whole beach where sand has built up. The cliff is also being divided into two parts by a new valley made up of water run-off from the road, much like the coombe at the other end of the car park. Its appearance will soften as vegetation regrows and in time will form a natural coombe.

What surprised us most was the amount of building materials and debris coming out of the cliffs. It seems that rubble from demolished cottages was dumped on the cliffs in the 1960s, and a former Victorian toilet was used as an informal village dump before being covered over. Most of the rubbish appears to have come out now, but our staff are still checking the beach daily and removing plastic and any harmful debris. Our volunteer archaeologist, Pam White, and her team are monitoring historic finds, which have included a 1970s crisp packet, a post-war Bovril jar and several pairs of women's tights! For safety, the beach will remain closed to the public until the cliffs have stabilised. See regular updates here: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/dorset/studland-bay/coastal-erosion-at-studland-bay>

Free entry pass for local families

Did you know that local families can get a free visit to Corfe Castle? Free access and car parking passes are held at Purbeck schools for families of pupils there. You just ask for the passes and they will be signed out to you, for return after you've visited. There are also free parking permits for families wanting to visit Studland, covering Shell Bay, Knoll Beach, Middle Beach, South Beach. Again, these are to be handed back to the school after use so other families can use them. It's a great chance to experience the wonderful history and landscapes on our doorstep, especially when for so many, finances are tight. Please ask about them at your school reception.

If you have any queries, email us on purbeck@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Cathy Lewis, the National Trust

PurbeckParkys VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY PARKINSON'S AND HELP US RUN OUR MONTHLY MEETING, ORGANISE FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES AND AWARENESS EVENTS

If you have a few hours per month to spare we would be delighted to hear from you. We hold our monthly support meeting on 3rd Wednesday monthly 2-4pm at Swanage Cricket Club BH19 1LG

For more information contact Claire Denby Local Volunteer Officer on 020 7963 3731 cdenby@parkinsons.org.uk



Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A registered charity in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).



Open Evenings!

We have two! Monday 2nd Feb, and Monday 9th Feb, both 7pm to 9pm at Corfe Castle's Village Hall.

Have you ever dreamt of treading the boards or learning how to create the magic of theatre? Double Act member Dougal has done both and is seen here revealing his stage model (nearly!) for our November '26 production.



Why not come along and join our flourishing, friendly and award winning Double Act drama group based in Corfe Castle?

This year we are producing a brand new spectacular version of the classic melodrama "The Cat and the Canary" for November 2026, 19th to 21st inclusive.

We are going to need youngsters who can pass for teenagers as well as anyone who can look like young men in their 20/30's. We are also in need of anyone technically minded who can be trained to operate our DMX lighting system. There will be a production launch at Corfe Castle Village Hall on **February 9th at 7pm** that will provide full details, but if you can't make that and are still interested please contact Dougal on 01929 556005 or Pete on 07551 183465.

On **Feb 2nd** we invite all members and anyone else interested to come for a social evening during which we will screen a recording of our recent pantomime, 'Alice in Cuckoo Land'. Please bring nibbles and drinks to share if you can.

If you would be interested in joining our friendly safe group or for more details, please contact the chairman, David Kemp 01929 480007, or secretary David Watson 01929 481265 - or email doubleactdramagroup@gmail.com
New members of all ages and abilities are always welcome!



Energy Outreach Project

Free Energy Advice Training for frontline workers and volunteers working with people who are at risk of fuel poverty

This free training session will equip you with the knowledge and tools to advise people who are struggling to keep their homes warm.

You'll learn how to:

- Identify someone experiencing fuel poverty
- Confidently support and advise
- Refer and access further support if needed



Book Now!

Scan the QR code or visit
<https://shorturl.at/Vz9gS>

Email caro.hart@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk or rl.sw@edpcitizensadvice.org.uk for more info

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS®

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. ... Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

This is still a very unsettling time. It is stressful for many people in many new ways. Some people turn to alcohol to help them cope and get through it. This can be more of a danger than a help to some of us. If you think you have a problem with alcohol we can help:

IF DRINK IS COSTING YOU MORE THAN MONEY then we can help you.

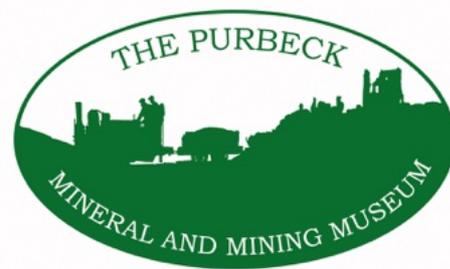
**Please telephone our free Helpline today:
0800 917 7650**



Local talks attract more volunteers to help showcase Purbeck's mining heritage

A series of talks given to community groups, local charities and organisations such as the National Trust is encouraging more and more people to play an active role in helping to showcase Purbeck's industrial heritage. The Purbeck Mining Museum near Norden station on the Swanage Railway is run entirely by volunteers and the contribution of local people is proving to be invaluable in helping to maintain and further develop this increasingly popular visitor attraction.

Peter Sills, the museum's Chairman, says the response to the various talks has been really gratifying in terms of genuine interest in an industry that has literally shaped the landscape and local economy of the area over many centuries.



Brian Biles, a former clay miner and one of the volunteers.
Photo: Andrew PM Wright

“Our talks aim to inform people about Purbeck's prominent clay mining heritage from a geological, economic, historical and social perspective, but we are delighted they are also prompting people to come forward and become more actively involved in our activities – even if it's just a few hours a week. From meeting and greeting visitors and artefact curation to carpentry, landscape maintenance, mechanical and electrical engineering and administration, the work of the volunteers is very wide-ranging and benefits from the different skills and interests of people of all ages.”

The latest talk organised by the Purbeck Association of the National Trust was held at Carey Hall in Wareham. Here, Peter Sills was joined by Brian Biles, a former miner of Purbeck ball clay and one of the museum's volunteers, who recalls the camaraderie and shares fascinating insight and experiences from his many years working in the mines from the late 1960s. “For me, the museum is like stepping back in time,” says Brian, “as it is housed in an authentic mine building with all the paraphernalia and equipment we used to extract the clay and to communicate between the pit head and mine-shafts.

It really does bring it all back to me when I hear children ringing the mine bell in the museum. And it's so rewarding to know that my memories as a miner are of interest to so many people – young and old, and from all corners of the world.”

Chris Morris from Swanage is one of the most recent volunteers to join the museum's team following a recent talk. Now retired, Chris was enthused by a presentation given by the museum's curator, Nigel Cox, to members of the Probus Club in Swanage. Formerly Director of Engineering for SkyTrain in Vancouver, Canada, he is already helping with track maintenance of the museum's narrow gauge railway and packing away exhibits and displays for overwintering. He is now looking forward to applying his various skills to help the museum prepare for the busy year ahead.

The Purbeck Mining Museum is now closed for the winter, but the work of volunteers is continuing at a pace as the venue prepares for next year when it will be open most days between Easter and October. More information on Purbeck's clay mining industry, full details on the museum's opening times and information on the roles and opportunities for volunteers can be found at www.purbeckminingmuseum.org.

The Mowlem's programme for February features a varied programme of live performance, comedy, music, and family films.

Highlights for February are:

- **Charlie and The Chocolate Factory** – 25-28 February 2026
The Swanage School are back at The Mowlem for their 10th annual production.
- **Artsreach presents: Luke Wright – Later Life Letter** – 14th February - 7:30 PM Acclaimed poet Luke Wright shares his adoption story
- **The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants (PG)** – 14th - 19th February 2:30 PM
The perfect family-friendly film to brighten up the half-term break.

You can view the full programme online at <https://themowlem.com/>





2025 has been a very busy, productive year with so much happening.

Our Christmas Fete of December 2024 was record breaking and the coverage afforded us by Swanage News was so helpful in seeing record numbers and income from the day. Our supporters are very generous but we have to raise our running costs effectively through our own efforts. This year saw us raising the most we have ever raised. This is achieved through contributions which people make for our plants, attendance at Fetes and our own Open Days.

Last Summer we attended an open day at the Boilerhouse in Corfe, the hospital Garden Party, Rotary Summer fair, Langton Allotment Open Day and hosted our own very successful Open Days throughout the year. We hosted the WI for a propagation workshop, made lovely wreaths at Christmas and gave talks to

the WI, Rotary and U3A about Greengage. We have continued to grow our veg, our herbs, cut flowers and more. I think its fair to say we have been busy!!

Any visitor to Greengage can now also see the fruition of a lot of planning, research and hard work in our lovely new garden building now being fitted out and readied for use. Thank you to Steve who has spent an inordinate amount of time and energy on this project. Thank you seems inadequate as there has been so much involved. Thanks also to Swanage Town Council, Talbot Village Trust and the Coop Development Fund for making it all possible.

Thanks to Les, a lovely new area has replaced a really untidy area in the corner next to Prospect Green. We are going to use this area as an area of quiet, or contemplation for anyone to use and we want to encourage this. The temporary raised beds have been useful but the money donated by carnival will now be used as the building and toilet are completed and we see how everything fits together.

We filled hanging baskets and pots for the hospital again this year and prepared some Winter displays in their planters. We purchased quite a few plugs last Summer and we used these to do the Hospital baskets and I would love to see us produce even more this Summer. Pots and baskets go really well with all our visitors and friends and I am certain we can produce more.

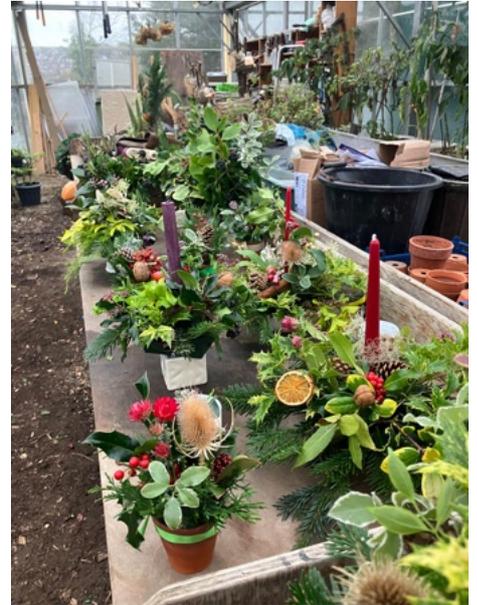
I said last year and I am convinced even more that most important in all that happens at Greengage are the friendships that have developed over the years and new ones are still being forged. Support for each other has always been part of the project and it is so important. We have had new people join us, and there are always people popping in to see what we do.

We have continued to welcome people from All Sorted who come with their carers. We would like to see the garden used by more groups who would benefit from visiting us and we hope that the new Garden Room will facilitate this.

This year things have not always been easy but the committee have been amazing and always have had Greengage and the wellbeing of its lovely volunteers as an absolute priority. My thanks again to all the committee for their nurturing of Greengage and the amount of work they put in. Thanks also to all the volunteers, all with different skills, who give so much of their time and energy to Greengage.

My personal priorities for this season

- Greater variety of plants of interest in the greenhouse and more produce to be grown using the beds and greenhouse.
- Growing plants that we need in the garden but also what our visitors want as they raise the funds for us by their donations...for example brassicas are crops that, at the moment, we don't grow a lot of, but the allotment holders are always coming in asking for them
- Our Facebook page and Swanage Matters posts - please 'like'; the Greengage website - please visit.
- Really good use of our lovely new building ... lots of events, lots of visitors, lots of fun!



Greengage is closed as a Community Garden at the moment until the end of February for our Winter break.



Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust
Charity Reg. No. 1162662

Swanage Medical Practice Patient Participation Group



Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team Update

29 January 2026, 2:00-4:00pm, at Corfe Castle Village Hall

Everyone is invited to this event when the Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team will be giving updates on all the work they have been doing over the last year - including the work they have been doing to develop a community approach to living well in Purbeck.

They will also be sharing the results of the survey about the health and wellbeing needs of people living in Purbeck, which was launched at the Health and Wellbeing Event held at The Mowlem in October.

The Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team brings together all the providers of health and care services in Purbeck - including primary care, community care, adult social care, children and young people services and the voluntary sector - so they can work together more closely to help people stay well for longer and provide streamlined, personalised support when people need it.

The PPGs of all the GP Practices in Purbeck are also working with the Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team to ensure people living in Purbeck are involved in improving and shaping local services.

Vaccinations

Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are still available for those who are eligible.

Winter viruses spread more easily in cold weather - vaccinations can lower the risk of serious illness and help you avoid a hospital stay.

To find out more about how to get your vaccinations or about local walk-ins, visit the vaccination pages on the Stay Well Dorset website at: www.staywelldorset.nhs.uk/vaccinations/.

Staying Well this Winter

NHS Dorset is asking local people to plan ahead - and to use the right service, so care is available for those who need it most. They have created a simple guide to help you contact the right service when you or your family feel unwell - this can be found at: www.staywelldorset.nhs.uk/update/stay-well-this-winter/.

PPG Meetings

The PPG now has 16 members. We last met on 13 January, when we were joined by Gill Foott, Community Engagement Officer at NHS Dorset. Gill updated us on changes at NHS Dorset - for more information, please see: <https://nhsdorset.nhs.uk/news/executive/>.

Our next meeting will be held at the Surgery on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 12:30pm.

Our next meeting will be held at the Surgery on Tuesday 2026 at 12:30pm.

You can find out more about the PPG, including Minutes of our meetings and our current Priorities, at: www.swanagemedical.org.uk/pages/Patient-Participation-Group.

If you are interested in joining the PPG, please contact **Natasha Ritchie, the Practice Manager**, or email the PPG directly at ppgswanage@gmail.com.

Dr Margaret Guy

Chair, Swanage Medical Practice PPG

PURBECK INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM UPDATE

This event will be to update you on the work of Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team over the last year and to also present the results of the public survey on the

29th January 2-4pm at Corfe Castle Village Hall

What's on?

The Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) have been working on a community approach to living well in Purbeck

Join us for an informative local event to:

- ✓ Hear updates on the work of the Purbeck INT
- ✓ Present the findings from the recent public survey
- ✓ Understand how patient feedback is helping to shape local services

Everyone is welcome – your voice matters!

Purbeck Integrated Neighbourhood Team
Transforming neighbourhood health and care together

Friends of Swanage Hospital

We welcomed a new Chair – Mrs Pat Cooper – in November 2025 following the resignation of Mrs Deirdre Selwyn at the AGM in September, after 3 busy years in the role of Chair. The Friends are very grateful for the hard work and enthusiasm of Deirdre during her tenure and presented her with flowers as she handed over the mantle to Pat at the November committee meeting, following a unanimous vote for Pat as the new Chair.



FRIENDS OF SWANAGE HOSPITAL
<https://www.friendsofswanagehospital.org.uk/>

The Minor Injuries Unit has requested help in providing knitted teddies for young patients, which can be a help and comfort when a child is hurt or distressed. The children get to keep the teddy and there is a knitting pattern available from the hospital for anyone who would like to knit any for the Minor Injuries Unit. The pattern can also be emailed or posted by contacting membership@friendsofswanagehospital.org.uk

Like most organisations, the lead up to and the time around Christmas and the New Year is generally pretty quiet for meetings and action, but we have our first committee meeting of 2026 with our new Chair in late January and also have some new trustees, so we are looking forward to an enthusiastic and determined start to the year.

We continue to do all that we can to support Swanage Hospital and eagerly await the feasibility study and costing re the re-purposing of the Day Surgery Unit. In the meantime, we encourage the different departments at Swanage Hospital to direct any funding requests for equipment, training etc., to the Friends. This often means that we are able to purchase and do things for the hospital which is not available using NHS funding or provide enhanced or better equipment than that which the NHS would provide. We are extremely fortunate to have the funds and support of the community to enable us to do this. In the forthcoming articles in this newsletter we will be giving details on some specialist equipment that the Friends have funded and how it has proved invaluable to the staff and patients.

As ever, we are grateful for the continued support of our local community. If you aren't a Friend of Swanage Hospital already, please consider becoming one to demonstrate your support for the hospital and to receive updates and news.



Swanage Jazz Club is proud to present

Spats Langham's Hot Combination

At The Mowlem Show Bar. On Friday 6th March 7.30

Long time favorite Tom Spats Langham returns with his 'Hot Combination' which takes you on a musical journey from Ragtime through the Hot Jazz and lowdown blues of the 1920s, the sophisticated swing of the 1930s, taking in the French Hot Club sound of Django Reinhardt, with jump-jive and Latin rhythms along the way. Spats has added to his 'Hot Fingers' trio the 'Cotswold Canary', Emily Campbell, bringing her unique talents to the blues music of Bessie Smith, the jazz of Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday and the gospel music of Mahalia Jackson and Sister Rosetta Tharpe.



Spats has played his music with lots of leading figures in the jazz world, including Chris Barber and Acker Bilk. His virtuoso banjo and guitar playing and singing, plus brilliant sense of humor have made him one of the most in demand figures on the British jazz scene.

There's a fully licensed bar from 7pm. And the music starts at 7.30pm.

Entrance is free, though there will be a bucket collection during the evening.



Should I set up a Lasting Power of Attorney?

Citizens Advice provides an explanation about why you may want to consider setting up a lasting power of attorney (LPA).

A friend has suddenly fallen ill, which has made me think about getting my affairs in order. I've heard of setting up a lasting power of attorney, but I don't really know where to begin, or if I really need to, as I'm not very old.

The first thing to know is that anyone can make a lasting power of attorney; it's not something purely for older people to consider.

Appointing a lasting power of attorney (LPA) means nominating someone such as a trusted friend or relative to act on your behalf and manage your finances, care or medical treatment, if you ever lose mental capacity. This could be because you're diagnosed with a health condition that prevents you from doing so, or something happens to you, such as an accident.

The kinds of illness which might prevent you from making decisions for yourself include: dementia, mental health problems, a brain injury, alcohol or drug misuse or the side-effects of medical treatment. Setting up an LPA doesn't mean you're expecting anything to happen, it's something you might want to do in case something happens in the future.

There are two types of LPA, property and financial affairs and health and welfare. You don't have to make both types at the same time but you must make an LPA while you are still capable of making decisions for yourself. This is called having mental capacity. Both types must be registered before they can be used and you should choose who manages your affairs for you, if you're no longer able to, very carefully.

A property and financial affairs LPA gives someone the authority to deal with and make decisions about things like buying or selling property, bank, building society and other financial accounts, welfare benefits and debts. You can give someone power of attorney to deal with all of those affairs, or only certain things. If you want to make an LPA which only deals with certain matters, you should make sure that it's drawn up very carefully.

A health and welfare LPA gives someone the authority to deal with and make decisions about things like where you live, your day-to-day care, and your healthcare treatment - either for all aspects of your personal welfare, or only certain things. It's not possible to use a health and welfare LPA until the person who made it has lost their mental capacity.



There are two ways you can make an LPA - either online at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or by [downloading the forms](#) from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). There is one form for property and affairs and one for health and welfare. If you want someone to look after both aspects, you'll need two separate LPAs.

Once completed, you'll need to register the LPA by sending the forms to the Office of the Public Guardian. If you need to pay a registration fee, you'll need to send that too.

If the form has been correctly completed and there are no objections after people have been notified, the Public Guardian must register it. This can take around 20 weeks. The Public Guardian must notify you and your attorneys that they have registered the LPA, and it can then be used.

You can find lots of information on LPAs and other shorter term power of attorneys [by visiting the Citizens Advice website](#).

If you would like to speak to an Adviser about setting up lasting power of attorney, please visit Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck website www.edpcitizensadvice.org.uk or call the Dorset Adviceline on 0800 144 8848.

Looking back, it's hard to believe how much our project has progressed in just one year. This time last year we were preparing to launch our Phase 1 build tender. Now, we're only days away from the Phase 1 build being completed!

A 2025 highlight was the skate jam in memory of Will Paddy with inspiring pro demos from the King Ramps Team. We also loved getting involved as volunteers at Swanage Carnival.

This year as a small volunteer team, we've juggled managing a tender process, running a public design consultation, hosting events, and working on grant applications for the Phase 2 build. It has been a lot of work! We were thrilled to end the year on a high with an incredible £10k donation from The Tome's family at Costcutter Swanage. This donation gave us a boost of motivation as we headed into 2026. We've now achieved 26% of our £80k Phase 2 fundraising target.

This project reminds us that we can't wait around for others to create the communities we want to be part of, we have to build them ourselves. The skatepark is that opportunity, and we'd love for more of you to be part of it! We're looking for volunteers to help us run more events at the skatepark this year. If you could help, please get in touch.



Photo: Andy Lyons

At the time of writing, Phase 1 is nearly ready to skate, watch this space as we announce a date for a celebratory park opening event when the warmer weather comes around.

Thank you to everyone who's supported and believed in this project. If anyone shops at Co-op and is looking for an easy way to support us, please download the co-op mobile app and select us as your chosen charity.



Acclaimed actor and director Sir Mark Rylance praises a "remarkable" film festival as it gears up to mark its 30th anniversary.

The Purbeck Film Festival was established in 1996 with the aim of bringing a variety of cinematic experiences to the area. Scores of films will be shown across Purbeck in the autumn, from cinemas and church halls to village halls and sports clubs, as well as a number of special events throughout the year.

Sir Mark, who is a patron of the festival, said: "We are indisputably lovers of film as our Purbeck Film Festival celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

"Quite remarkable when most cinema festivals and indeed cinemas themselves are struggling to survive the juggernaut of new technology.

"Of course, cinema has survived the invention of sound, of tv and computers. Will it survive the isolating technology of AI. Artificial intelligence, which puts the mind and knowledge before the heart and soul of what it is to be human?"

"I know small festivals like ours are a god send for film makers, often imagining something different than the mainstream world, as we all do who live on the beautiful Isle of Purbeck."

The festival began by showing films in two local cinemas but has grown to screen scores of UK and international films including outdoor summer events at local landmarks including Corfe Castle.

The main festival runs from October 16 to November 1 this year.



Herston Community Halt is the smallest station on the Swanage Railway and is located one mile west of the Swanage terminus. It was built from scratch, using recycled materials & was opened to passengers on Good Friday 1984. As the railway track was laid to Harmans Cross & then Norden the Halt was less used, and closure was considered by 1997 as the timber platform was expensive to maintain. However soldiers from Bulford near Salisbury Plain started to assist with maintenance, an association which was to continue for the following 20 years.



In 2007 Team Herston was formed, comprised of local residents and military veterans, who to this day maintain the structures and tend the gardens. There has always been a project or two in motion. In 2004 soldiers installed new steps and an access ramp from Washpond Lane. In 2009 the rotten wooden platform was dismantled and replaced with a longer recycled concrete structure (from Woodside in south London). Out kettle was connected to the National Grid in 2013, and more recently we extended Mercury Siding by 120 feet to enable light maintenance to be undertaken on railway wagons at the station.



Over recent years, we have lost some of our loyal team, including Peter Wright who supported his wife Carol, together with Marilyn Carter, maintaining the gardens for over 20 years. **We are hoping to welcome new volunteers**, who engage in a wide variety of tasks on site, including building work, painting, landscaping and refurbishing our wooden planked 1938 railway vehicle.

Once complete the Scenery Van will be home to an exhibition showing how the British Army has supported the Railway & the Town since 1983. We meet up at 0900hrs most Fridays and also on the 2nd Saturday of the month; why not pop down for a brew and say hello. We even have cake sometimes! Please contact: frank.roberts@swanagerailway.co.uk. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Pent Up House Trio

in the Showbar, February 10th, music from 7.30.

Please note! This is not on the first Tuesday of the month, as is usual, but a week later on the 10th February.

This months gig will include as guests, on trumpet Nick Aiko and on Congas and percussion Malcolm Orgee.

We will be featuring a latin tinged program so bring your dancing shoes!

Nick is a local young player in his gap year before going on to study music in Spain. Malcolm is an experienced percussionist steeped in the latin music tradition who has studied in Cuba and South America.

Admission is free. If you would like to show your appreciation there will be a bucket collection on the bar.



Live Jazz in the Showbar



DEADLINE

for contributions to the April / May 2026 issue of the Newsletter

MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026

Photograph by Gwenda Yeomans

Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust

NEWSLETTER February / March 2026

VOLUNTEER SUPPLEMENT



Swanage Volunteer Bureau

Give a Little, Gain a Lot

Would you like to: make a difference, use existing or learn fresh skills, meet new people, have fun and be proud to know that you have helped keep Swanage great?



This supplement lists local organisations who need volunteers, so do contact any that you want to pursue. If you want to find out more about these and many other opportunities to help, we're here to give independent information and advice across a wide range of organisations and volunteering, from one-offs to regular support.

Pop in and meet our friendly Volunteer Champions at the Welcome Lounge, Focus Centre, on the first Tuesday of the month 10.00-12.00, starting 3rd February.

To find out more or view our web pages online at <https://www.sandpdt.org.uk/swanage-volunteer-bureau/>.

Finally, we will be at the Swanage Coop on Thursday 29th January from 10 – 12 to help find you the perfect opportunity. Are you coming to see us? Do pop in!

Kim Gallagher, Swanage Volunteer Bureau

Swanage Folk Festival

Volunteering Opportunities:

For the Swanage Folk Festival, we are looking for volunteers to help out throughout the weekend of the festival. There are many areas to help out including helping in the tent, collecting, and road closures. All are vital in making sure the festival is a success. If interested, volunteers can apply through this link: <https://swanagefolkfestival.com/information/can-you-help-us/>

"I'd been coming down to the Folk Festival long before I moved to Swanage; volunteering for the last few years has enhanced my experience of it, I love the connection with people and helping them get the very best out of their time at the event." - Annette W.

Contact:

Virginia Payne volunteers@swanagefolkfestival.com - Facebook: Swanage Folk Festival
Website: swanagefolkfestival.com

Swanage Community Defibrillator Partnership (SCDP)

About Us:

SCDP was set up in 2015 to provide public accessible defibrillators (AED's) across Swanage and the local area. 54 defibs are now in place and have been deployed almost 300 times.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Volunteers run the steering group and a wonderful team of volunteers act as defib guardians, monitoring and maintaining the defibs and cabinets on a regular basis.

"I am proud to be the guardian of two defibrillators in Swanage. It's an important and worthwhile contribution to the heart of the community" Deirdre Mersey



Contact:

Maggie Hardy 07917 362 603 , hardymaggie@gmail.com or through Corbens Estate Agents, Station Rd., Swanage

Swanage Disabled Club

About Us:

The Swanage Disabled Club relies entirely on volunteers. Each week about 30 people, most of whom would otherwise be housebound, are given the opportunity to meet over refreshments and a wide range of activities - with a talk or other form of entertainment being offered occasionally by way of variety. Additionally there are regular outings.

Volunteering Opportunities:

There are many ways in which volunteers can assist with the running of the Club: driving the vehicles, helping as a vehicle escort, assisting with setting up the meeting room or with catering, and joining in with or supervising the activities as an easy way of getting to know the members.

"This is a lovely, well established club. Very welcoming, friendly and active. Everyone engages with activities and outings but if you just to chat and laugh you can. The volunteers do a lot of that!" - Sarah R.

Contact:

Virginia Payne 07742556749 Facebook: Swanage Disabled Club



Swanage Youth Club

About Us:

The club runs on Friday evenings from 6 to 9:15pm for children between 10 and 18 years old. We are a welcoming and fun team.

Volunteering Opportunities:

Are you wondering whether you could make a difference in your local community? Are you interested in developing young people to become more confident, compassionate, skillful and kind? Swanage Youth Club is looking for volunteers to help run the club and more importantly for those willing and enthusiastic about building supportive relationships with the Swanage and Herston youth.

Contact:

If you are interested in doing something that warms the heart, please contact youthclubswanage@gmail.com and tell us a little bit about yourself. (onboarding is subject to a DBS check and references)

The Purbeck Mining Museum

About Us:

Purbeck Mining Museum is housed in an authentic clay mine building with replica underground tunnel and showcases Purbeck's mining heritage with displays, videos and demonstrations on the restored narrow-gauge railway.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Volunteer opportunities are very wide-ranging and reflect the different skills and interests of people of all ages – from providing a warm and friendly welcome for visitors to artefact curation, carpentry, landscape/ building maintenance, mechanical/ electrical engineering and administration. Anyone keen to offer regular or occasional support will be given a very warm welcome as well as the opportunity to learn new skills as part of a close-knit and supportive team of volunteers. No previous experience is necessary – just an enthusiasm to support the ongoing development of this important heritage attraction and a willingness to roll up one's sleeves.

For more information <https://purbeckminingmuseum.org/join-us/>

"I think it's vital to preserve our heritage for future generations and I really enjoy the interaction with visitors to the museum – especially when I see the eyes of children open wide as they discover our clay tunnel and make the connection between the raw clay in the ground and the cups and plates they use at home." Paola Hobson

Contact:

Paola Hobson purbeckminingmuseum@swanagerailway.co.uk - <https://purbeckminingmuseum.org/>



Swanage Pier Trust

About Us:

Swanage Pier is a cherished Victorian landmark on the Jurassic Coast. The Trust protects and maintains it, safeguarding this historic structure for future generations.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Volunteering at Swanage Pier is a chance to meet new people, gain skills and spend time in a unique heritage setting. Opportunities include welcoming visitors in the gatehouse, assisting with events and weddings, supporting education activities and helping with pier maintenance. Volunteers play a key role in preserving the pier's Victorian charm, sharing its history and ensuring visitors have a memorable experience. Whether you enjoy meeting people, working outdoors, or supporting behind-the-scenes tasks, there's a role to suit a variety of interests and skills. Every volunteer helps protect this much-loved landmark and contributes to its future for residents and visitors alike.

www.swanagepiertrust.com/volunteering

"It is fun to be part of a great team, contributing to the Pier and supporting our heritage"

"I enjoy working on the gate and meeting the customers - some of whom are very interesting with their extensive knowledge of the Pier"

Contact:

Amanda Bell activities@swanagepiertust.com - 01929 425 806 - www.swanagepiertrust.com/volunteering



PurbeckParkys VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY PARKINSON'S AND HELP US RUN OUR MONTHLY MEETING, ORGANISE FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES AND AWARENESS EVENTS

If you have a few hours per month to spare we would be delighted to hear from you. We hold our monthly support meeting on 3rd Wednesday monthly 2-4pm at Swanage Cricket Club BH19 1LG

For more information contact Claire Denby Local Volunteer Officer on 020 7963 3731
cdenby@parkinsons.org.uk



Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A registered charity in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).



Swanage Lifeboat Station



We are looking for volunteers to join our Engagement & Water Safety Team. If you are interested and would like further information, please contact:
01929 423237
alan_sparks2@rnli.org.uk

Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck

About Us:

Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck is looking for volunteers to help on their Advice Bus, providing free, confidential advice to residents whilst bringing vital support and guidance to those who need it most. The Advice Bus reaches rural communities, providing essential help to residents who may not be able to access our offices and outreach locations. The Advice Bus, has helped over 3,000 residents since 2023 when it was first on the road. Demand has been steadily increasing as it's become an essential service to many. The Advice Bus stops at locations across East Dorset & Purbeck including: Bovington, Corfe Castle, Lytchett Matravers, Swanage, and Wool.



Volunteering Opportunities:

Volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, including students, to recently retired, to people looking to get experience after having a career break. The Advice Bus stops at 10 locations across East Dorset & Purbeck and volunteers are needed at the different locations. We would ideally like people to be able to commit to one day a week. Full support and training will be given.

Contact:

For more information about volunteering on the Advice Bus, visit www.edpcitizensadvice.org.uk/volunteer

Swanage Depression Support

About Us:

Swanage Depression Support (SDS) is a small mutual support group meeting fortnightly on Wednesday evenings. It is open to people experiencing depression either themselves or in their families, with a view to being a safe and supportive space. We alternate sharing sessions with simple art and craft activities. Meetings are gentle and affirming, with members sharing their ups and downs. Confidentiality is paramount.

Volunteering Opportunities:

Meetings are facilitated by two people on each occasion. Due to the resignation of one of our team due to work pressures, we are looking for someone to join us. Facilitators will have some experience of depression, their own, in family or friends, or as mental health professionals. They will be empathetic, good listeners and have skills in overseeing group discussions. Facilitators will work in pairs, have time after each session to de-brief and be part of bi-monthly group professional supervision sessions, paid for by SDS. Appropriate insurance will be in place.

Contact:

Interested people should contact Alan Dominy at swanagedepression@outlook.com (phone 07871 799479), who will send an application form. We shall require a DBS check, references and an interview.

Swanage Medical Practice PPG

About Us:

Swanage Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) works with the Practice Manager and the GPs at the Practice to help improve and shape local health services. The PPG is made up of people registered with the Practice who have volunteered to get involved. The PPG meets every two months. You can find more information about the PPG on the Practice's website - including our Terms of Reference, current Membership and the Minutes of previous meetings.

Volunteering Opportunities:

We are always looking for new members. Some of the things we do:

- Help improve communication between the Practice and people registered with the Practice, as well as the wider community
- Talk to patients about their experiences of using services provided by the Practice and carry out Patient Surveys
- Feed back ideas and concerns to help shape services and improve the patient experience
- Provide a patient perspective on the development of new services
- Help people to become more informed about their healthcare options and how to access local services
- Help organise health awareness events and meetings on specific topics of interest
- Raise funds to help improve the services provided by the Practice.

Contact:

If you are interested in joining the PPG, please contact Natasha Ritchie, the Practice Manager, or email the PPG directly at ppgswanage@gmail.com.