



Swanage & Purbeck  
Development Trust

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# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Report November 2022

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## Contents

- Page 2 Contents
- Page 3 Purpose - Method - Partners
- Page 4, 5 Narrative - Data
- Page 6 Key Findings
- Page 7 Outcomes Achieved February 2023
- Pages 8,9,10 Existing support and advice identified, including evolving projects that need communicating to wider community
- Pages 11, 12 Wish List
- Pages 13, 14 Long Term
- Page 15 Communication Plan

## Appendices available on request for Wellbeing Swanage

Minutes from meetings 13.07.22 - 06.09.22 – 15.11.22

Swanage and Local Area Warm Welcome Matrix

Reports supplied to support research and impact data

- Wellbeing Swanage Tackling Hunger in Swanage and local villages. Debby Monkhouse
- Dorset Council Swanage Cost of Living Report II October 2022

# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

## Purpose

The Swanage Town and Community Partnership meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 raised as a priority “the impact of the cost of living” for the local area.

Wellbeing Swanage agreed to take the lead with Tom Clark (National Trust) agreeing that Alex Brocklesby (National Trust) was best placed to lead to the task and finish group to create an action plan for Swanage and the local villages for Winter 2022.

## Method (minutes attached in appendix)

An initial meeting was hosted on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 “what is the problem specific to Swanage and the outlying villages”

Second meeting was hosted on 6<sup>th</sup> September

Third meeting was postponed from October 4<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>, although initial concerns that this would be too late, it worked to the advantage of the work being undertaken, as some of the identified ideas and initiatives were able to take shape and project plans formulated.

Those who were not able to physically attend the meetings, were asked for their contributions and information via the minutes and the action plan being shared with them.

## Partners

- Wellbeing Swanage
- Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust
- National Trust
- Public Health Dorset
- Swanage Patient Participation Group
- Swanage Food Bank
- Dorset Council – Early Help (Children’s Services) Communities and Partnerships
- Food for Thought
- Swanage Rotary
- Swanage Town Council
- Sustainable Swanage
- St Marks Church
- St Marks School
- Churches Together
- Volunteer Centre Dorset
- Citizen’s Advice
- The Loft
- Purbeck Transport Action Group
- Help and Care

# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

## Narrative

Five themes had been suggested in line with corresponding themes already identified by local and national government. **Housing – Energy – Food – Travel – Leisure**. The focus would be on what the local needs are with input from local people/organisations and community groups.

The group was not about taking on everything but identifying the problems in the area and trying to mitigate further hardship for local people.

The information gathered can be used to lobby for local action and highlight local issues.

Health is not a standalone category as these threads throughout the themes, as the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is affecting many people's wellbeing and health.

We have included communication as a key strand for us, as this seems to a priority to get the information to the people who need it – it is recognised that many people are digitally excluded so cannot access the information online.

## Data

We focused our data collection through the 4 questions –

1. What is the current situation people are facing in Swanage re the cost-of-living crisis looking at the 5 categories: food, travel, leisure, housing, energy?
2. What evidence is there (qualitative and quantitative) that supports this current crisis?
3. To evidence the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in Swanage – we needed information and evidence about:
  - How are things now? anecdotal evidence
  - What previous situations have been (improved/got worse/same issues recurring?)
  - Where are things headed and the impact this will have?
  - What proportion of Swanage's population and how many people/households this will affect?

## Local impact data and anecdotal evidence

Reports shared by partners

- Wellbeing Swanage Tackling Hunger in Swanage and local villages. Debby Monkhouse
- Dorset Council Swanage Cost of Living Report II October 2022
- Number of people on Universal Credit and Legacy Benefits. Debby Monkhouse (Minutes 13<sup>th</sup> July 22)

# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Reference to Dorset Council work on Act Early Cost of Living Help publication – <https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2022/06/15/dorset-residents-urged-to-act-early-with-cost-of-living-help/> Dorset Council Dorset residents urged to act early with Cost-of-Living help - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help>

Dorset Council Data was shared but it was agreed that due to the instability of the data, following the changing Government priorities and policy and energy price freezes, it was not recommended that the slides and data were not included but an overarching summary is provided below.

Dorset Council modelled data on discretionary spending was presented. Based on Government priorities and policies of the time (including energy price freezes), the data provides forecasts on household discretionary income across Dorset. These forecasts are caveated by the fact that they are based on modelling and therefore not to be taken as fact of what will happen; likewise, it is not to say that all household groups within the area will be similarly affected.

However, based on the modelling, the data for Swanage at the time of the cost-of-living group meeting (pre-Autumn statement), forecast that the households most likely to be affected within Swanage are Family Basics, in the Herston and Swanage Townsend areas. The modelling suggests these family groups may have between £0 and £50 discretionary income throughout 2023 and in to 2024.

Modelling post-Autumn statement, forecasts that these same households may now have less than £0 discretionary income during 2023 and 2024, and that in 2024 other household groups and areas may move into the £0 - £50 discretionary income bracket - this data was not available at the cost-of-living meeting on 15 Nov 2022.

Family Basics is defined as 'families with limited resources who budget to make ends meet'. It is expected that in Family Basics there would be at least three or four people in each household.

Discretionary income is the income available to spend. It is disposable income (after taxes) less all the payments necessary to meet current essential bills (such as rent, insurance, food, transport, heating).

## **Anecdotal evidence**

- *Local Resident - There is a very high proportion of free school meal entitlements at our local St Mark's School compared to the national average, with similar figures being seen in other more typically inner-city areas such as East London, indicating the level of need in our immediate communities for further support.*
- *Margaret Guy – anecdotal – there has been an impact on people's mental health already – the practice manager is collating data – increasing number of people presenting at practice.*

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Swanage Food Bank – *needs have doubled in last 6-12 month.* Reported on Facebook Page (Nov 22) - The numbers of those in food poverty needing aid have doubled over the past turbulent year, so from January to September, we have been called to help 1,460 adults and children. Because everyone is given 3 meals a day for seven days, this amounts to 30,660 meals.

### Key Findings

It should be recognised that this was a task and finish project, and this is the final report from this exercise.

The importance of communication and how the information is shared is a key priority and is outlined in the communication strand. Swanage Town and Community Partnership will generate a press release following the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> December via local media. Wellbeing Swanage will then incorporate as much of the communication strand where relevant through existing local channels; Other partners are encouraged to share information as widely as possible, taking into account the wish list and the implications of the long term issues when they are future planning.

Recognition that there is a lot of help available nationally, regionally, and locally but it is unclear how this links to the local community, with access to information and services being a key component to people not receiving the help required.

The information below is a compilation of the findings and information gathered at the workshops

They have been categorised into

- **Communication** – National, regional, and local initiatives that are already taking place or due to start following local level discussions and actions – these need to be communicated to the local community and support agencies and groups via the communication strand.

Highlighted in blue are the newer local initiatives that are being taken forward following this collaboration and other research.

- ✓ Further cost of living workshops
  - ✓ Community purse to finance local projects
  - ✓ Warm the person
  - ✓ Co-ordinated warm welcomes
  - ✓ Community pantry fridge
  - ✓ Fareshare – local redistribution of good quality, surplus food
- **Wish list** – Ideas and suggestion of other projects or local initiatives that could be taken forward by others.

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

- **Long Term** – Identified concerns that impact on the local community, some already have a project leading on improving these outcomes; whilst others could inform the local plan and strategic planning.

### Outcomes Achieved February 2023

The local community response to the cost-of-living crisis, showed that by bringing a collective group together to identify local needs and gather local intelligence; enabled all involved to take away actions and develop local schemes to support people in a time of crisis.

- Advice, support, and information – Citizen's Advice increased attendance at Herston Community Café to a weekly basis. Cost of living workshops and information sharing opportunities were available through local community groups and community connectors.
- A community purse was set up to finance local projects through an agreement with SPDT and Swanage Rotary, where donations for example from an individual's winter fuel allowance could be held. Criteria and application procedure will be available to community groups in March 2023.
- Warm the person – local crafters came together to create 76 blankets, 9 pairs of bed socks and 28 draught excluders which have been distributed to the community through the community pantry, seahorse toddler groups and explorer's childcare. Blanket/duvet donations were also provided to families at Herston Yard.
- Co-ordinated warm welcomes – the national initiative saw 12 venues across Swanage and the local villages offering a warm welcome space, providing refreshments and in some places offering soup and a roll. Working together to ensure that there was something available every day of the week across the area.
- Community pantry fridge – in conjunction with Sustainable Swanage a community fridge was funded through a Dorset Council grant to expand the community pantry offer; this enabled good quality food that would otherwise go to waste from supermarkets and other food businesses to be saved and made available to the community for free. The community pantry has reduced waste food by 1,163 kg since April last year. This is increasing as we go forward as we are now able to take chilled and frozen food (and freeze some fresh items for future distribution). Lots of discussions about freezing ripe bananas to make banana bread and cake! Any surplus from the pantry on a Monday is shared across other community groups until all is gone.
- Fareshare – Swanage's FareShare Mobile Larder was launched on Monday 9th January 2023, based out of St Mark's School, and will serve hundreds of families in Swanage, Corfe Castle and Langton Matravers who are being increasingly squeezed by the cost of living. 50 families have signed up to

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

the first phase of the scheme. The second phase is planned for Summer 2023 focusing on to target a different demographic - older people on pension credit in town centre area

### Existing support and help identified and evolving projects that needing to be communicated to wider community

Theme	Area of concern Identified	Support and Advice Provision information to be shared
Combination (TBC)	Cost of living Information sharing	Mario Sobczak/BCHA The Loft Are planning to offer workshops including financial tips and cooking skills, and more elements over the next week or two. – Start date Dec 22
Housing	Accommodation availability for homeless people coming to Swanage	Shelter
Housing	Sense of isolation especially amongst seniors	Help & Kindness, Wellbeing Swanage Directory, Linking Lives
Housing	Some local housing stock have poor insulation and heating which impacts on cost of living	Dorset Council low carbon support LEAP Local Energy Advice Partnership Ridgewater Energy – part of Healthy Homes Dorset
Energy	More Energy Advice Workshops needed within the local area to share information	Citizen's Advice EDP CA -Currently crowd funding for a Crisis bus from Jan 23 – which could offer services across Purbeck <a href="http://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/cost-of-living-crisis-support-bus">www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/cost-of-living-crisis-support-bus</a> Specialist Energy Advisor available by referral 01929 775500 Dorset Community Action - The Loft
Energy	Sharing the local Information more widely so people can access help.	Purbeck Energy Group LEAP Local energy advice partnership
Energy	There are a lot of initiatives available but there is a need to share information and knowledge	Champions offering training as above DCA offering training on energy saving and fuel poverty Places to share Community Café's/ schools Warm Welcome/churches together Purbeck Coast Radio Foodbank Planet Purbeck/Sustainable Swanage St Marks School offering to host session



## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Energy	Some local housing stock have poor the cavity and wall insulation, which means homes cost more to heat	Healthy Homes Dorset Ridgeway Energy – Wellbeing Swanage Community Connectors to share
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Area of concern Identified</b>	<b>Support and Advice Provision information to be shared</b>
Energy	Suggestions that those who can afford to offer their £300 winter fuel payment to support a fund for those who have difficulty	Swanage Rotary will be acting as a community purse so funding stays local, alternatively <a href="#">Dorset Community Foundation</a> are offering this regionally – the funding is distributed via Citizens Advice
Energy	How to refer people to additional funding options – surviving winter grants	Citizens' Advice – Surviving winter grants of £200 available going forward for over 60s and over 50's with health conditions
Energy	Initiative of warm the person – knitting clubs already making a supply of blankets, hats etc	Distribution outlets needed Herston Citizens Advice outreach offer as venue
Food	Access to support with food needs there is existing local support available St Marks report increase in demand for breakfast club (50 children) funded by Greggs	SPDT – community café Community Pantry Friendly Food Club Food Bank Lunch Clubs School Food Banks – breakfast clubs
Food	To extend the help and support being offered through the warm welcome spaces to provide a warm soup and roll	Churches Together leading coordination of all the community spaces
Food	Due to the lack of affordable local supermarkets – the Social Supermarket model was looked at but would not work in Swanage. However the Fareshare scheme – Food for thought, looks a viable option – Funding granted from Dorset Council to support	Debby Monkhouse – Chris Bradey leading Plan to launch on 9/01/22 targeting schools in the first wave, aim to have second mobile pantry if can demonstrate demand. <i>(this food will not disrupt the food chain to existing food projects locally e.g. foodbank, community pantry – as it is coming from a distribution hub in Southampton)</i>
Food	To help reduce and cut down on waste – sell by dates are being removed nationally and the Community Pantry/Sustainable Swanage are working locally to collect	Community pantry already in place to collect food past dates and distribute Community Pantry will be setting a community fridge to extend the food on offer to chilled items.
Travel	Due to the lack of some local health care services, people struggle to attend appointments, affordable and accessible travel to health care appointments are available but some people not aware of these	GPs to raise awareness Wellbeing Swanage Directory CAN Care Communicare Disabled Club Accessible healthcare travel – E-zec <a href="https://e-zec.co.uk/dorset/">https://e-zec.co.uk/dorset/</a> Public booking and information line for patient and carers

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Travel	Public Transport costs - A basic principle is that bus fares should be easily affordable for everyone. The free travel concession for seniors is welcome, but too general. Many older people could easily afford to pay, say, half fare. The poorly funded concessionary fares scheme has led to bus service reductions because bus companies are inadequately reimbursed. Means testing of the free bus pass would be too difficult and expensive to administer, but some form of voluntary contribution, say £1 per journey might help. PTAG information £2 fares Jan – March 2023 subsidies	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Area of concern Identified</b>	<b>Support and Advice Provision information to be shared</b>
Leisure	Heading into Christmas – with the increased cost of living many local families will have limited funds for toys etc – this will add additional stress	Wave 105 toy appeal - Cash for kids - Salvation Army Toy Appeal (Carol Richards ) Toy swap (explorers)
Leisure	Raise awareness of the local walking for health groups – free local countryside access	Share information – Wellbeing Swanage directory
Leisure	Promote access and inclusion for all in the local youth provision	Youth Club WillDoes Bus Cummulus
Leisure	Raise awareness of the support available for those who need help to access	Help and care link workers/PCN
Leisure	Promote access and links with allotments	Greengage Project
Leisure	There are many activities locally that are low cost or no cost activities for all – ability to share this information and encourage local people to access	Andy Knill Cricket and football clubs The Loft Community Space SPDT Dorset ANOB packs Carers support Dorset Help and Care (signposting) Live Well Dorset National Trust Pass
Leisure	To help with impact of the cost of living promote the re-use and repurpose facilities available locally Sharing skills – sewing – repairing	Clothing swap Repair shop Shed Durlston Sustainable Swanage Community Pantry

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

### Wish List

Theme	Area of concern Identified	Action Needed	Possible suggestions from those taking part in workshops (some of those named may not be aware they have been suggested yet)
Housing	Herston Yard – is it suitable for young families? No cooker – microwave only and calor gas	Ways we can support families with microwave meal suggestions – affordable and healthy	Friendly Food Club session? HVH has new cooker funded Dorset Council St Marks/ Swanage School ?
Wellbeing	St Marks Schools some families have shared that the reduction in income is leading to further isolation	School was thinking that a weekly coffee morning in their hall after drop off would be great for this as everyone is here so not having to make that effort to get anywhere.	Staffing this is a problem due to lack of time, may ask the PTA. Any thoughts or input welcome.
Energy	Launderette offer	Through offering a washing machine facility – but there is a need help to cover the energy cost to the school	St Marks Rotary – act as purse for donated winter fuel funds (FT see above re Dorset Community Foundation – although this is particularly for older people and fuel costs – so Rotary scheme might be a wider offer?)
Food	Offering cooking clubs in schools Help to budget – learning to cook	Identify someone to lead project	The Loft have offered cooking skills Jane Linger The Hub?
Food	Access to out-of-town supermarkets	Community bus suggestion Shared delivery slots	Disabled club/football club/SPDT)? Meeting planned for 7 <sup>th</sup> December Fareshare scheme may help with this
Food	Cooking facilities are limited in some homes – no cookers. donate a slow cooker – would need someone to co-ordinate	Would need slow cooker recipes and ingredients to be available to those who need it	? Friendly Food club Rotary? Foodbank and Food for Thought. Besom? The Loft? (There are other similar initiatives – they have found it needs to cooking workshops for soups and stews etc – and generally attract older clients due to dietary preferences)

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Food	Encourage more people to grow their own food. Access and using the Greengage Project	Share knowledge how to grow	Greengage Project?
Food	Pass it on – pay it forward Schemes to buy meals for local people – also supports local businesses	Someone to facilitate this	?
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Area of concern Identified</b>	<b>Action Needed</b>	<b>Possible suggestions from those taking part in workshops (some of those named may not be aware they have been suggested yet)</b>
Travel	22% of people don't have access to a car	Active Travel Group looking at need/want for a pool car Questionnaire needs to be completed	Sustainable Swanage
Travel	Access to services – DWP in Poole cost to get there – nonattendance means no benefits get paid	Access to areas with free Wi-Fi for zoom interviews. Partnership developed with DWP	Chapel Lane Wellbeing Hub (SPDT) Swanage Library
Leisure	Accessible activities – incentive to encourage people into the warm welcomes -	Discussion needed	? what would bring people in Could warm welcomes be used for armchair fitness?

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

### Long Term

Theme	Area of concern Identified	Action Needed	Possible suggestions from those taking part in workshops (some of those named are not aware yet)
Housing	Identified lack of affordable housing locally	Plan to include in future developments	Community Housing Trust
Housing	Suitability of rented accommodation - Private rented accommodation being turned into holiday lets opposed to long term lets. Unstable short term lets - temporary housing	Local Plan consultation	Town Council
Housing	Young people sofa surfing or living with parents – no fixed abode	Scheme where younger people live with an older person	Research needed
Housing	No local voice or access to housing help	Could a local drop-in session be facilitated	Dorset Council /housing associations
Housing/energy	The impact on rural communities – including those off grid and who dependant on oil and other fossil fuels for heating	Improved gas connections	?
Housing/Travel	Herston Yard emergency housed families getting to school. This is a huge problem for the families, those at The Swanage School and those at the pre school - Herston Explorers. Families are walking in the dark and rain up and down that road with pushchairs etc, plus pupils walking alone.	May have to run a joint minibus but lack funding. Families are asking for taxi support, but Schools cannot fund.	We have talked to Dorset Highways and Swanage Town Council for support awaiting response
Travel	Community Bus (see Durlston bus option)	look at Nordcat model - community project - use volunteer drivers - build on existing schemes - develop something new	Meeting planned for 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec 22 to explore

## Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Travel	Encouraging active travel	What initiatives are out there – electric bike/scooters Walking buses	Town Council
Travel	Group bookings for taxis	Hospital/DWP visit	Someone to coordinate
Theme	Area of concern Identified	Action Needed	Possible suggestions from those taking part in workshops (some of those named are not aware yet)
Travel	Access to local services Another avenue that could be explored is how the closure of local branches of banks, libraries, job centres, clinics etc is adversely affecting those who now must rely on sparse and expensive public transport the access these services. Those unable to access services online are also having difficulty accessing public transport due to lack of printed timetables and the "technology" needed to obtain affordable advance-purchase fares. The fares and concession arrangements are also sometimes difficult to access and understand, so that some people who can least afford it may be paying too much.	These remarks mainly apply to bus companies and there are several community bus initiatives, usually supported by local authorities and these should be encouraged and expanded. The situation with train companies is different, because of the complicated and questionable national subsidy and governance structure. This makes it more difficult to suggest ways to assist the train traveller.	PTAG
Leisure	Access to Wareham Sports Centre – due to travel costs or no transport	What is available locally? How can we share this	Football/cricket club
Leisure	Access to affordable local activities	Is there a possible discount scheme for local community	Town council? Swanage Town and Community Partnership?
Leisure	Locals not accessing the beach	Why? Is there any data to showing this	Town council? Swanage Town and Community Partnership? National Trust?

# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

## Communication Strand

### How do we share information effectively with those who may be unable to access

Area of concern Identified	Existing Provision information
Digital exclusion – where no access to internet, knowledge, or skills	Dorset Council Digital Champions Library – more volunteers and venues needed – training available
Methods to getting information out to all that need to know - using all types of communication avenues is key All medias	Wellbeing Swanage Website/Facebook - community connectors - Swanage News - Gazette - S&W advertiser - Newsletters (schools/churches/SPDT) GP practice - Friends of Swanage Hospital - Purbeck Radio - Parish Clerks - magazines -Radio Solent - Noticeboards - TIC - Info centre - Town Hall - Library - Parent mail - Swanage Area Forum  Wide range of info here: <a href="#">Cost of living help - Dorset Council</a>
Data shows that there is a high level of carers in the local area – some maybe isolated and not be aware of the support for carers	Help and Care – The Leonardo Trust Links with the GP surgery and Hospital
How to get information to those with poor literacy or EAL	Talking - open access to information - drop in session Warm Welcomes Community Pantries Wellbeing Hub (SPDT)
Go to where the people are at events – community groups	GP flu clinics/ planet Purbeck ..... Community café - toddler groups - school events - sports - social clubs – Co op
Removing the stigma – everyone in same boat	
Pop up sessions in the community	Market – talking benches – Co op

# Swanage and Surrounding Villages Cost of Living Crisis Report November 2022

Final