

**FRIARS CLIFF RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 7 March 2024 at 7.00 pm**

**Present**

Steve Alves, Chairman  
Paul De Jonghe, V.Chair & Forum Editor  
Louise Heybourne, Secretary & Environment Rep.  
Cllrs Leslie Dedman  
Cllr Paul Hilliard  
Cllr Stuart Perry

**Apologies:** P Skeggs, S Webb, M Ward, S Luder, K Ward

**Guest:** Cllr Vikki Slade, Leader of BCP Council

**Committee Positions & Re-election**

All members of the Committee stand down opened up to local residents and as no-one came forward, the current Committee were re-elected unanimously.

**Review of 2023**

The review of 2023 was shown, including items from the following areas:  
Social Secretary – 6 events held, Water Quality presentation by Director of Wessex Water, Heritage – Steamer Point notices designed, MCA Site – Phosphate mitigation achieved and application in progress. Quarterly meeting Format changed.  
Communications to residents by Facebook, email newsletter, website. Catchment area – review held of roads & members. Toilets – partial refurb only. Lifesaving Club - £1,000 grant.

**Current Issues:**

- Local Plan – 300 policies into approx. 100 – April further consultation details on website.
- Seafront Services – jet skis too fast, beach zoning wanted for safety.
- Heritage Signs – totems signed off, installation soon and official launch in summer.
- Parking – grass car park opening still needed – harmonisation parking charges has seen more on road parking in winter.
- NCI – no progress, FCRA not going to accept losing shelter.
- Trees – plan to address this progressing (see detail)

**Local Area Trees**

2021 – Met Arboriculturalist to discuss Tree Pits, Tree Planting & Hedging  
- Identified 77 Trees & 16 Hedges eligible for planting  
- BCP planted 11 trees

- Tree pits remain covered as they come under the Highways Department

2024 – Meeting with Jeff Tinney, BCP, Cllr Paul Hilliard, Louise Heybourne to discuss 20 Tree stumps of various heights along Avon Run Road and Seaway Avenue.

- BCP will cut tree stumps to ground level
- BCP will plant 10 new trees in Avon Run Road
- BCP will replace 2 felled trees with new trees in Seaway Avenue
- BCP preferred specimens : Maritime Pine & Corsican Pine

FCRA or public donation could uplift difference for a few Monterey Pines.

Residents brought up

- a. Stump busting - ? will damage roots of nearby trees.
- b. Holm oaks – invasive by nature – further question for Jeff.
- c. Tree pits require opening by BCP Highways, to create a tree pit
- d. Footpath between golf course – dangerous and slippery – Cllr PH Action
- e. Sculpture for tree stumps, we did look at but they were too sappy

### **Heritage**

Heritage Totem Poles at Steamer Point as well as a nature trail and display boards, due end of March. Will be historically accurate. Designs shared with residents. BCP engaged with FCRA as stakeholders, opening Ceremony planned for May /June

Levelling Up Fund for Somerford and the desire to create a culture & heritage trail, signs from Somerford, through Mudford Wood (RAF Christchurch 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) to Stanpit Marsh (smuggling) and Gundimore Beach (Mosaics on sea facing side of sea wall) – residents will be involved and going for consultation.

Feedback School involvement of pupils may be helpful – PDJ Action

**Financial** - 2022 £18K and 2023 £18K balance in account. Looking at projects to spend some money in the next year.

**Social** – Picnic on the green, few walks and talks proposed for this year.

### **Councillor Update:**

#### **Cllr Paul Hilliard**

- Dorset Wilts & Fire Community Safety Plan 2024-28 on website for consultation 3<sup>rd</sup> May & share views
- Thursday 14 March 1pm @ Stewarts drop in with Police
- Work for Long Groynes at Hengistbury Head starts in April
- 6<sup>th</sup> June is 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary D-day at Christchurch Town Council have event at Christchurch Quay

- 25 & 26<sup>th</sup> May Christchurch Council and Businesses in Christchurch – Local Stalls in High Street and Food Festival Quomps
- 200 Anniversary of RNLI – Service at The Priory
- No planned works of dredging or beach replenishment this year, plan to let settle and monitor.
- Groyne Markers, engineering team will straighten up markers that have blown over.

**Cllr Leslie Dedman** Statement that FCRA do a great job.

**Cllr Stuart Perry** Communications officer created new electronic newsletter, can all sign up to receive regularly.

16 March re-opening old Town Hall in Christchurch between 10 am to 2 pm Open Day

Lost Mayors Secretary and Front of House Receptionist and Finance Officer, town council currently recruiting.

Advanced stage of negotiating premises in Saxon Square (Halifax Offices opposite WH Smith).

Resident: Congratulated Town Council on publishing weekly town council planning list and decisions for the area.

**Guest Speaker, Cllr Vikki Slade, Leader of the BCP Council**

Acutely aware and passionate about protecting, preserving and enhancing the identity of the different places within Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole. Council is there for its residents; tourists are there to support the residents, which is the centre of new Corporate Strategy.

Previous leadership was about creating a city by the sea. Over the course of 3 years the Council went from having £120 million of reserves down to £27 million of reserves. Government almost placed the Council in special measures and gave the council a best value notice. We now have Lib Dem Independent Council Alliance.

**Finance** - There was a £44 million financial gap. Council looks at Budget this year and also medium term financial plan (4 year rolling budget). There was £20 million worth of cuts assumed in the budget we are about to start that nobody knew about. Last 8 months spent trying to sort funding gaps and have balanced budget for April 2023 to March 2024 but also balanced the 4 year rolling budget so should not have to find any further cuts, assuming that inflation, interest rates, pay awards are as expected. Resized the Council to a stage that is now affordable to run and made some tough decisions including.

- Closed Highcliffe Day Centre permanently
- Handed over The Quomps to Christchurch Town Council

**New Corporate Strategy** (what do we want to do and what are our markers of success). Strategy written to set a vision for the future around people, communities, environment, place and set a list of priorities. Over the next few weeks BCP will be issuing an action plan. Every quarter we can see what success look likes, and the measures set can be seen on a dashboard so that everyone can be held to account.

**The Local Plan** - Christchurch and Bournemouth are out of date, Poole has a Local Plan. When implemented, this will set the vision for the place and decide where can be developed and where can't. Important to have Local Plan adopted. 20<sup>th</sup> March is official public consultation and we have 6 weeks to make any comments. The comments go to planning inspectorate and Secretary of State, to review. Planning Inspector will approve plan and then it is adopted to set a vision for next 15 years.

BCP will not always consult if no choice, for example Kings Park Plant Nursery losing quarter of a million a year. Two charities came forward to run it.

Air Festival cost £400,000 a year to tax payer. This year allocated £200,000, next year has got to run independently.

### **Q&A Session**

**Revenue spends** will be shared. Christchurch area has 35-40,000 people, only 10% of overall population, spend is based on need. Capital into Christchurch – 2 Riversmeet has investment. Levelling up fund - Housing projects, School projects, also massive spend on flood defences coming in.

Christchurch Civic Centre sell off won't be ring-fenced for Christchurch and has to be spent on transformation. Poole Civic Centre is being sold and won't be ring fenced.

**Bus improvements** coming in.

**20 mph zones** expected over time in residential areas will probably move to 20mph position. Policy passed and zoned BCP's whole area, residential roads & back roads, to have zoning and consulting (not major roads). In an area where evidence of people killed & seriously injured, or schools these areas will be consulted about going into 20mph zones. Allocated costs at £149,000 per year. Christchurch Town Centre is the third one on the list.

**Urban Tree Strategy** set by Cabinet in May of how we lift the tree coverage across BCP. Christchurch Area has high tree coverage in Commons and Highcliffe. Low in Somerford, Grange and Friars. Council will be taking proactive action to lift up the tree coverage.

Can planted trees not be automatically given TPO? Vikki will check with tree team.

Council manage trees therefore non-TPO across Friars Cliff Area, the assumption is that trees on public land in public ownership **are by their nature protected**.

TPO's on private land ensures that a private owner does not destroy a tree.

If concerned where a house for sale, properties being sub-divided etc, take to Ward Councillors to apply for a TPO, may well be an argument that there is “**risk**”.

**Future Places** previous development company has been closed down, all staff joined council or gone. Previous administration set up this development company with £8 million working capital loan agreement. Discovered within £18m spent £5 million and delivered nothing. Not transparent, **had to write off £2.5 million**. They also had a Futures Fund - £50 million on paper, didn't need a Business Case and was like a credit card, also removed.

**Net Zero by 2030** for the internal Operations of the BCP Council. Country signed up to 2050 for Climate emergency.

Residents were happy that business and charities will be running air festival.

**Accommodation bid** – Council working with Hotels paying tourist tax, if the hotel go with yes vote, ballot held next month, people will pay a visitor charge of £2 per night to go to a not for profit organisation, across 3 towns and generate £2 million a year.

**Second Homes** as of April 2025 will pay double council tax.

**Empty homes** as of April 2024, whilst in probate don't pay council tax then exempt for another year rising to charge of 200%, which will be paid when property sold. Have written to everyone with an empty property.

**Council Tax** – going up by maximum amount 4.99%, 2.99% for council and 2% precept. Two thirds of council tax paying for adult social care. Discussed high costs of funding Education, Health and Care Plans and wider National Issue.

Meeting ended approx. 9:45