

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 07 November 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman – Chairman

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr J Bagwell, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr O Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr J J Butt, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr B Castle, Cllr J Challinor, Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr B Chick, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr M Cox, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr M Dower, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D A Flagg, Cllr M Gillett, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr E Harman, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr M Howell, Cllr A Keddie, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr R Maidment, Cllr A Martin, Cllr D Martin, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin, Cllr C Matthews, Cllr S McCormack, Cllr P Miles, Cllr S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover, Cllr M Phipps, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr J Salmon, Cllr P Sidaway, Cllr P Slade, Cllr V Slade, Cllr M Tarling, Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight and Cllr K Wilson

36. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Aitkenhead, H Allen, J Clements, E Connelly, B Dove, D Farr, A Filer, M Haines, K Rampton and L Williams.

37. Declarations of Interests

Richard Jones, Interim Monitoring Officer, declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 10 and confirmed he would leave the room for the duration of the item.

38. Confirmation of Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting. A typographical error in minute 32, (motion relating to knife crime), was highlighted as requiring amendment.

RESOLVED: - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.

Council agreed that the order of business be amended to take the motion concerning the conflict in Israel and Palestine first, followed by Cllr K Salmon's question to the Leader of the Council. Detail on these items can be found in minute 47 and minute 48, respectively.

(Cllr K Salmon left the meeting at 19:40)

39. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

Cllr P Broadhead paid tribute to former Poole Councillor David Newell who had passed away in September. Council passed its best wishes to Mr Newell's family.

The Chairman updated Council on her activities since the last meeting. These included attendance at:

- Scouts achievements awards;
- Indian cultural association event;
- Summer reading challenge;
- Police Station opening in Boscombe;
- Arts by the Sea launch;
- Lord Lieutenant prize giving;
- Christchurch Advent Calendar;
- Russell Cotes museum exhibition;
- BCP Black History Month event;
- Legal service for High Sheriff;
- Bournemouth University Graduation.

The Chairman invited Council to refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour following the meeting.

The Vice Chairman updated Council on his activities since the last meeting. These included attendance at:

- Hindu festival;
- Commodore's reception;
- Formal opening 'Against Architecture' exhibition at the Arts University.

40. Public Issues

(a) Public Questions

Public Question from Daniel Glennon

Somerset Council have banned advertising of vehicles powered by petrol, diesel or hybrid power; fossil fuels; and airlines, airports and flights on their platforms. Will BCP Council commit to do the same and also extend this to funders of fossil fuel projects such as JP Morgan? According to the Financial Times JP Morgan were the biggest financier of fossil fuels between 2016 - 2021, totalling nearly \$400bn.

Response by Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Thank you, Daniel, for bringing this to our attention. The intent behind the Somerset product advertising initiative is certainly in line with our ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help tackle climate change. The implications of this suggestion will be researched and, if it is found viable, will be put before Cabinet for a decision.

With respect to the activities of local business organisations, the Council will continue to work in partnership with major employers to encourage them to take all appropriate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all their activities, including procurement and financing. Indeed, we raised this issue with Barclays Bank following a Council resolution last year, who told us that they are committed to aligning their financing portfolios, in every sector, with the goals and timelines of the Paris Agreement.

To achieve our BCP area wide targets, we need to work positively and proactively with all the major local organisations.

Public Question from Soo Chapman

An International team of Scientists has identified 35 vital planetary signs of which 20 are being pushed to record extremes. Life on Earth is "under siege" and there's "little progress on humanity combating climate change". (Bournemouth Echo 28.10.23.)

Shockingly, embarrassingly, neither this significant news (nor a more inspirational Transition Town vision) appears on BCP's website nor on any government website.

Plans are out-dated.

No speedy decarbonising programme is in place for our well-being and protection as the natural world disintegrates.

How will BCP (bearing in mind Councillors' safeguarding brief and adherence to Nolan principles) please address biospherical collapse while informing, incentivising and protecting the public from the dangerous accumulation of greenhouse gases, loss of sea ice & glaciers, rising land and sea temperatures, fossil fuel usage, extreme flooding and species extinction as well as potential societal breakdown which is "feasible" and has been "dangerously unexplored"?

Response by Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Thank you for your question Sue.

I am very conscious that the Climate Change website pages need revision, and I understand a member of our Climate Team is actively discussing with you the sort of information that would be appropriate for, in your words, "informing, incentivising and protecting the public". The entire Council Website is currently being reworked, and I am keen that the content includes helpful and honest challenge, and practical advice.

Sustainability is at the heart of our new Corporate Strategy, on which we have recently consulted residents. Our Annual Climate Report is also being prepared, which will inform residents of the progress towards our targets. Significant steps are being taken towards a low carbon future, which includes:

- creation of a Local Area Energy Plan, to inform decisions around low-carbon energy use and generation;
- an Urban Forest strategy, currently out for consultation, and;

- collaborative work on a Local Nature Recovery Plan to protect and increase biodiversity.

The evidence of decades of global under-delivery of change is evident in the more extreme weather events that we all see, and BCP Council, businesses and residents need to play our part in rising to the challenge.

(b) Public Statements

Statement from Mark Elkins

At a packed meeting of Eastcliff and Springbourne Residents Group two weeks ago today we heard that the Authorities did not have the resources to remove Street Prostitutes and Street Drug Users causing issues.

Eastcliff and Springbourne Ward has, along with Boscombe West, the second worst Police Crime map figures in the BCP Council area. It also has very similar levels of deprivation. Yet despite this, Eastcliff and Springbourne Ward, promised at one time Bournemouth Towns Fund funding, is in fact by comparison to Boscombe West starved of resources to deal with the significant problems it faces. Please remedy this.

Statement from Simon Grimston (by Mark Elkins)

Dear Councillors

East Cliff and West Cliff have similar problems of street sex workers and drug dealing and drug use. The examples provided to me come from members of the community. These problems have not just appeared.

We are particularly concerned by the changes to the area relating to licensing and establishment hours. The once peaceful area is being blighted by more and more establishments operating as Nightclubs. West Cliff has a conservation area at its centre and the transformation is negatively impacting residents and businesses that live and work here.

Councillors, use your future decisions to positively impact our neighbourhoods.

(c) There were no petitions received for this meeting.

41. Cabinet 25 October 2023 - Minute No. 48 - Christchurch Civic Offices

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox, presented the report on the Christchurch Civic Offices and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the item before Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED that Council: - that Council, after consideration of any feedback from a consultation with Christchurch Town Council, approve the disposal of the former civic offices in Christchurch on such terms to be approved by the Chief Financial Officer, also acting in his capacity as Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Voting: For: 57, Against: 5, Abstention: 3.

42. Cabinet 25 October 2023 - Minute No. 49 - SEND Programme of Expansion - Broadstone First School

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Councillor Richard Burton, presented the report on the SEND Programme of Expansion - Broadstone First School and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council: - that Council approves the capital budget set out in Appendix 1 (Exempt), which is funded from DfE grant monies, to enable the construction works and related processes to be undertaken to create the facilities for 20 SEND places at Broadstone First School.

Voting: Nem.Con.

43. Audit & Governance 26 October 2023 - Minute No. 34 - Appointment of independent co-opted members to Audit & Governance Committee

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, Councillor Marcus Andrews, presented the report on the appointment of independent co-opted members to Audit and Governance Committee and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council: - approve the appointment of two co-opted independent members to the Audit and Governance Committee for a period which will end on 31 March 2026 and that Samantha Acton and Lindy Jansen van Vuuren be appointed accordingly.

Voting: Nem.Con.

44. Appointment of Councillor to Appeals Committee

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade, presented a report on the appointment of a Councillor to the Appeals Committee and moved that Councillor Chris Rigby be appointed.

RESOLVED that Council: - appoints Councillor C Rigby by way of nomination to fill the vacant seat on the Appeals Committee.

Voting: Nem.Con.

45. Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

(Richard Jonest left the meeting at 20:14)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade, presented a report on the appointment of an Interim Monitoring Officer, and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED: - that Richard Jones be appointed as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer in accordance with the statutory

requirements until a permanent appointment is made to the role of Director of Law and Governance.

Voting: Nem. Con.

(Richard Jones rejoined the meeting at 20:16)

46. Non-compliance with Standards Complaints Process - Determination

The Chairman presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The report was presented for information and provided Council with details of those complaints where members had failed to comply with a determination requesting that an apology be made following the informal resolution stage of the complaints process.

47. Notices of Motion in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Cllr J Salmon and seconded by Cllr K Salmon.

That this Council:

- Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in the BCP area who have been affected by this conflict we offer our support in this difficult time.
- Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.
- Believes Muslims, Jews and people of all faiths and none should feel safe and supported throughout the world; that the increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic violence in the UK is reprehensible and should be punished to the full extent of the law.

This Council resolves to:

- Through the equalities action commission explore how the council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.
- Offer appropriate support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- Stand ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.
- Condemn the use of all dehumanising language and calls on our communities to treat each other with respect and refrain from inflammatory terms to describe either the Palestinian or Israeli populations.
- Continue flying the UN flag as a symbol of peace outside the Civic Centre until a ceasefire is agreed.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the motion before Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED: -

That this Council:

- **Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in the BCP area who have been affected by this conflict we offer our support in this difficult time.**
- **Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.**
- **Believes Muslims, Jews and people of all faiths and none should feel safe and supported throughout the world; that the increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic violence in the UK is reprehensible and should be punished to the full extent of the law.**

This Council resolves to:

- **Through the equalities action commission explore how the council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.**
- **Offer appropriate support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events.**
- **Stand ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.**
- **Condemn the use of all dehumanising language and calls on our communities to treat each other with respect and refrain from inflammatory terms to describe either the Palestinian or Israeli populations.**
- **Continue flying the UN flag as a symbol of peace outside the Civic Centre until a ceasefire is agreed.**

Voting: For: 45, Against: 0, Abstention: 21.

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Cllr C Cooper and seconded by Cllr P Canavan.

That this Council is concerned that the introduction of requiring residents to produce photo ID in order to vote at polling stations is having a negative impact on our democracy by disenfranchising particular sections of our society. For example, in some wards, turnout was noticeably lower than in 2019. This Council therefore agrees to raise these concerns with the Local Government Association, local MPs and Government as a matter of urgency to seek the removal of this unnecessary requirement on voters.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the motion before Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED:

That this Council is concerned that the introduction of requiring residents to produce photo ID in order to vote at polling stations is having a negative impact on our democracy by disenfranchising particular sections of our society. For example, in some wards, turnout was noticeably lower than in 2019. This Council therefore agrees to raise these concerns with the Local Government Association, local MPs and Government as a matter of urgency to seek the removal of this unnecessary requirement on voters.

Voting: For: 60, Against: 4, Abstention: 1

48. Questions from Councillors

Question from Cllr Canavan

Could an update be given regarding the situation with Future Places Limited. In particular:

- a) How many of the previous Future Places staff have now transferred to BCP?
- b) Has the previous office that Future Places staff were working from now been vacated?
- c) Are all assets including IT equipment, financial information and intellectual property now in the hands of BCP?#
- d) What steps are being taken to assess the overall cost of engaging, and winding up, this company to the Council Tax payer?
- e) Future Places appears to have operated with limited oversight or scrutiny so what steps are being taken to review any lessons learnt and exactly who knew what and when regarding its operation?

Response by Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade

Thank you, Councillor Canavan, I will take each of the queries in turn.

- a. 13 of the 19 staff that were in FuturePlaces two months ago have transferred. One of those, the Managing Director, is being consulted with regard to potential future employment and another, the Chief Operating Officer, has resigned.
- b. Yes, the office was vacated early, on 31 October and a new tenant is moving in, reducing the rent commitment considerably.
- c. Yes, we believe that we have taken control of all of the IT equipment and information etc.
- d. We are assessing the overall cost, but this will not become clear until we have been able to value all of the work in progress and the consulting and strategic planning work that has been completed but not yet charged for. This is likely to take until December.
- e. Internal governance is being reviewed to ensure that we have a robust structure for oversight of development delivery and risk management is in place, which will include an independent advisory

board, the terms of reference and membership of which is being finalised. We will keep Councillors informed on the progress.

Supplementary question from Cllr Canavan

I am grateful for the assurance regarding the review of oversight going forward but my question also asked for a review of what happened in the past. It is important to take on board lessons learned. Is there assurance that we will look at what went wrong?

Response by Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade

The matter needs review by the Audit and Governance Committee as the most appropriate route for all matters of governance. I hope that Councillor Andrews will be happy to take this on so that we can have it done in public, with the appropriate scrutiny. I am happy to work with the officers required.

Question from Cllr Rigby

Could the Leader of the Council give an update on the progress with starting a governance review of the current leader and cabinet system and the opportunity to replace it with a committee system. This was promised to commence within six months of the formation of the current administration, and I think we are about there.

Response by Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade

Thank you, Councillor Rigby. During the initial negotiations to form an administration, one of the commitments we made to the Green Party Group was to “Commit to A Governance Review within 6 months”. Cllrs will be aware that BCP council was the subject of a Governance Review by DLUHC when we came into office, and it was right to consider the issues in this report as a priority before starting any other internal governance reviews.

The A&G Constitutional Working Group had their first meeting at the end of July and I asked them to consider the potential of a Governance Review but they were clear this was beyond their remit and capacity as they were prioritising the following three areas that will be delivered by the end of this civic year:

- Changes to O&S structure;
- Introduction of two planning committees (one East, one West);
- Restarting of Transport Advisory Group.

All of which are on track to be delivered by the beginning of the next civic year.

Officers in Democratic Services have confirmed that they are at capacity and would be unable to support other work programmes without additional financial input. Other councils have set aside up to £100,000 for such work. We must be mindful of this cost.

Members will be aware that we are having to close a budget gap of over £44m and so committing these funds before we have balanced the budget is simply not feasible. Every member of this administration has been shocked by the huge amount of time and effort required by the whole team

(officers and members) to try and close the deficit. I hope that those members who attended the budget workshop on Friday now understand quite how difficult this is.

However, the Chief Executive has spoken to other Chief Executives in councils that do have Committee systems (including Sheffield) to gain their insight into the process, risks and costs and I have spent some time in London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames who have a Committee system, where I discussed their experiences and potential issues to consider. My LGA mentor is also the leader of a council running a committee system and it is a regular discussion point at our meetings.

The Three Towns Alliance remains committed to a full governance review but is having to move more slowly on several of its key projects due to the budget pressures, including the implementation of the Residents Card, extension of the 20mph zones and our Climate Plan, and so we hope members will be satisfied that making a number of smaller changes to the way we work, consult, engage and report in the meantime will demonstrate our commitment to this work even if it is having to go more slowly than we had hoped.

I can confirm that the next step towards a governance review is an informal consultation with Cllrs on the governance and procedural issues that they would like to see changed while we are considering the more substantive change from cabinet.

Members will shortly receive an invitation to a session in December to consider ways to improve this governance.

Following that, a Task and Finish Working Group, chaired by myself, will be convened to consider the options and bring them back to members early in the New Year so that we can take the process forward formally, hopefully just a few weeks outside of the former plan.

(Councillors Bagwell and Butt left the meeting at 21:00)

Question from Cllr J Salmon

Has the Council any solid evidence there is any cost benefit or other benefit to switching to cashless only provision of Council-run facilities like car parks and kiosks selling ice-cream and whether that outweighs the potential drawbacks such as inaccessibility and so on, that comes with moving to cashless provision?

Response from Councillor Mike Cox, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Thank you for the question.

Switching to cashless payment methods for services such as car parks and seafront facilities offers demonstrable cost savings due to the removal of the need for cash collection, banking costs and associated administration. For cashless parking meters it reduces the maintenance costs incurred as well reducing the likelihood of machine thefts which requires the council to purchase new equipment on top of the income lost.

Any decision to go cashless for services provided by the Council will always consider the wider equalities impact.

Supplementary Question from Cllr J Salmon

I would like to see evidence and numbers behind the decision.

Question from Cllr K Salmon

Given the dire state of local government finances across the country, with ever increasing numbers of local authorities known to be nearing financial breaking point due to the spiralling costs of delivering their statutory duties with no additional support from central government (a local example within the last two weeks being Hampshire County Council), what is the level of engagement between BCP Council and our local MPs in terms of their role of representing the communities they serve at Westminster? Do you think they are aware that the Council has responsibilities beyond Christmas lights and blue flags, for example children's services, housing and adult social care?

Response by Leader of the Council, Councillor Vikki Slade:

Thank you for raising this important issue. When I became Leader I was quick to engage with all five of the Members of Parliament that cover the BCP Council area. I invited them to meet me on a one-to-one basis every three-four months, and also confirmed I would arrange for them to join me, the Chief Executive and any relevant officers for a face to face meeting at the Civic Centre each quarter.

I can confirm that four of them have had their first one-to-one meeting (Sir Christopher Chope, Sir Robert Syms, Sir Conor Burns and Tobias Ellwood) and that two of them have attended our first group meeting (Sir Christopher Chope and Sir Robert Syms). I also welcomed Tobias Ellwood to the BCP Hospitality Marquee at the Air Festival where he entertained two of his diplomatic contacts.

In addition, I have had two further one to one meetings with Sir Conor Burns and he will be attending the forthcoming Town Centre summit. He also arranged a meeting – which he also attended – with the Roads Minister Richard Holden in Parliament to discuss our request for freedom to increase fines for illegal parking.

For the record, the other MP – Michael Tomlinson – has declined all requests to meet.

During our meetings, I always ask MPs for the issues that they wish to raise, whether they are matters brought up by individual constituents or issues for the Council. At each of the four one-to-ones Future Places, cleaning up the Council's reputation, planning improvement and the Council's wider finances have been on the agenda.

There have been some very high profile criticisms of the Council by one particular MP and I have questioned why they did not raise these issues with me direct during our time together and suggested in my public responses that they would be better informed if they had attended the most recent meeting where the main topic of conversation was the financial position of Council, including the Council's potential eligibility for future bids, SEND funding, business rate reform, social care legislation, and matters relating to the Local Plan and issues of housebuilding and homelessness.

Finally, I do also keep the MPs updated when there are incidents that occur in their constituency, and I am aware that they all receive copies of press releases and consultations from the Council.

49. Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution

The Chief Executive confirmed the urgent decisions taken as follows:

1. Appointment of the Interim Monitoring Officer, and;
2. Appointment of the new Corporate Director of Wellbeing.

The meeting ended at 9.02 pm

CHAIRMAN