

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman (15 October only)– Chairman

Cllr S Bull (4 October only) – Vice-Chairman (in the chair for 4 November)

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr H Allen, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr J Bagwell (15 October only), Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr O Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr J J Butt (15 October only), Cllr P Canavan, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr J Challinor, Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr P Cooper (15 October only), Cllr M Cox, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson (15 October only), Cllr B Dove (4 November only), Cllr M Dower (15 October only), Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr A Filer (15 October only), Cllr D A Flagg (15 October only), Cllr M Gillett (15 October only), Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr E Harman, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr B Hitchcock (15 October only), Cllr M Howell, Cllr A Keddie (15 October only), Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr R Maidment, Cllr A Martin, Cllr D Martin, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin (15 October only), Cllr S McCormack (15 October only), Cllr P Miles, Cllr S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty (4 November only), Cllr B Nanovo (4 November only), Cllr L Northover (4 November only), Cllr M Phipps, Cllr K Rampton (15 October only), Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr K Salmon (15 October only), Cllr J Salmon, Cllr P Sidaway, Cllr P Slade, Cllr M Tarling, Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight (4 November only), Cllr L Williams, Cllr K Wilson (15 October only) and Cllr G Wright

23. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Bull, B Chick, J Clements, B Dove, C Matthews, A Moriarty, B Nanovo, L Northover, V Slade and C Weight for that part of the meeting held on 15 October 2024.

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive and Councillors J Bagwell, J Butt, E Connolly, P Cooper, L Dedman (Chairman of Council), D d'Orton-Gibson, M Dower, A Filer, D Flagg, M Gillet, B Hitchcock, A Keddie, J Martin, S McCormack, C Matthews, K Rampton, K Salmon, V Slade and K Wilson for the reconvened meeting on the 4 November 2024.

24. Declarations of Interests

The Monitoring Officer advised that all Councillors had been granted a dispensation in respect of Agenda Item 9 (Cabinet 2 October 2024 – Minute No. 59 - Community Governance Review of BCP Council area) to ensure

that all Councillors were freely able to fully participate in the debate and vote. In addition, the Monitoring Officer advised that the granting of the dispensation would be reported to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

The Chief Executive advised that whilst there had been no specific declarations of interests received that Councillors who were directors of council owned companies may wish to declare their directorship in interest for the purposes of transparency for Item 10 (Cabinet 2 October 2024 – Minute No. 60 – Council Owned Companies Shareholder Governance Review).

Councillors S Bartlett, D Brown, M Earl, D d’Orton-Gibson, M Howell, A Martin, S McCormack, J Salmon, P Sidaway, and K Wilson declared interests in Agenda Item 10 (Cabinet 2 October 2024 – Minute No. 60 – Council Owned Companies Shareholder Governance Review) and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

In addition, Councillor M Howell also declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 (Cabinet 2 October 2024 – Minute No. 55 – Poole Civic Centre) as the Sheriff of Poole and Chair of the Civic Working Group.

25. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 23 July 2024 and the Council meeting held on 23 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the start time of the Council meeting following the Extraordinary meeting being amended to show a start time of 7.38pm.

26. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

The Chairman advised Council with great sadness of the recent death of Councillor Brian Castle who had sadly passed away following an illness. Councillor Kieron Wilson gave a moving tribute to Councillor Castle who had been elected onto the Council in May 2023.

The Chairman reported the sad passing of former Councillor and Mayor Bob Chapman who was elected to Bournemouth Council in 1981 and was Mayor from 2002-2007 and was granted Freedom of the Town in February 2019.

Councillor J Beesley relayed personal experiences of working with Bob Chapman following which Councillors stood in silent tribute to Councillor Brian Castle and Bob Chapman.

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

- Romany Holocaust Memorial
- VJ Day commemoration
- Opening of the Castle tearooms
- Air Festival Launch
- Air Festival Reception for the Lord Lieutenant
- Air Festival – beat the retreat
- Councillor Castles funeral

- Emergency Services Day
- Battle of Britain Service Memorial at Christchurch Priory
- Access to Food partners event

27. Public Issues

The public questions and statements set out in the minutes below are printed as per the wording used within the submissions made in accordance with the constitution.

As a number of public questions were on a similar topic a single response was provided as set out below.

Public Question from Alex McKinstry

On 16 November 2023, in exempt session, the Planning Committee discussed the Highmoor Farm planning application, seemingly at the behest of officers, who had "serious concerns" about the Committee's refusal of that application. What options were put to the Committee at that meeting? The outcome, as paraphrased by the director of planning, was that officers were to go away and seek "external expert advice"; so why did 34 days elapse between that decision and 20 December 2023, when such advice was finally sought from planning barrister Stephen Morgan? Was this a tactic by officers to allow the applicants room to appeal on the grounds of non-determination, which may have proved less costly for the Council? (Such an appeal was indeed launched on 5 December 2023, during the 34-day hiatus.) Finally, is this matter being audited, this being the third non-determination appeal on a major application since 2022?

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

During the exempt session of the Planning Committee on 16th November 2023 relating to the Highmoor Farm planning application, the options for Members formed part of an exempt report from which the public were excluded. That was in accordance with Paragraph 5 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. In particular Exempt information – Category 5 (information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings). That position remains and so the content of the report and related advice cannot be publicly disclosed.

Between the meeting on 2nd October 2023 and the matter being brought back to Members in January 2024, Officers continued to progress the instructions of Members. On or around 5th December 2023, an appeal against non-determination was lodged by the appellant which also then needed to be addressed and prior to Officers being able to conclude Members' instructions. There was no tactic by Officers as stated and the process described accounts for the period in question.

This case is not currently being audited, but the Monitoring Officer is aware and will keep the position under review along with the Director of Planning.

Public Question from Soo Chapman

Mass death & suffering caused by climate breakdown is a crime of oblique intent. The ICC & all 123 signatory nations have the power to prosecute.

The public should be warned of "global ecological collapse"*, and that, if we conserve global resources, there could be a survival trajectory.

Media, politics and the judiciary hypocritically condemn non-violent direct action while Broadmoor policies, including massive subsidies for mis-sold deadly fuels, guarantee Grenfelling damage and at the same time play down the £trillions of costs as systems collapse.

How quickly please can BCP implement a Safety Decarbonisation Programme for residents?

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

Sue, thank you for your question and challenge.

This is a global and not just a local problem, but we have to do what we can locally to conserve resources, to adapt, and in your words, to create a survival trajectory. To support this we must transform our energy systems, our food production, reduce consumption and shift to circular economic models.

A number of my colleagues, Councillors from across the Chamber are currently taking up an offer of Carbon Literacy training, from the Southwest Net Zero team.

You will also know as you were there, that 4 of our 5 local MPs attended a meeting last weekend organised by local participants in the Climate Coalition, held in the Durley Environmental hub, to highlight the urgency of action, and I was heartened by the MPs assurances of renewed intent and action, 100 days into the new Government.

On providing decarbonisation coaching for residents, and visitors, we are looking to improve the information on the Council website, and I have expressed a keenness to use the Durley Hub and other venues, to deliver a programme. We have been recruiting to support this.

Public Question from Daniel Glennon

Bees pollinate 40% of leading food crops; less than 25% of the world's leading food crop species are wind pollinated. Bees, especially solitary bees and bumblebees, are in serious decline in the UK. We have already lost around 13 species and another 35 are at risk. Pesticides are one of the key threats to bees, yet BCP council spray nearly 3,000l of pesticides, including glyphosates, on our roadsides, parks and open spaces annually. Exposure to glyphosate not only poses a risk to human health and other living organisms, it also threatens biodiversity and the future of agriculture.

Will BCP council pledge to help and support bees and all other pollinating insects by taking the following actions:

- 1) Stop spraying Council land with pesticides and other harmful chemicals;
- 2) Sign up to PAN UK's Pesticide-Free Towns Campaign for advice and support to achieve this?*

* <https://www.pan-uk.org/information-for-local-authorities/>

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

Daniel, thank you for your question.

We have a statutory responsibility to ensure the Highway is safe to use and its structural integrity is not adversely affected by vegetation. We are legally obliged to control certain types of invasive species including on our Countryside Stewardship Sites by DEFRA and are required to respond to Schedule 9 weed species of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese knotweed.

We use an integrated weed management approach to our land management working towards aligning itself with the Councils Climate and Ecological declaration in 2019, and I am concerned as you are, about collapse of Bee colonies, and other insect life. A range of other methods are used including mechanical and manual sweeping, manual hoeing, mulching, creating wild meadow habitats and nurturing volunteer efforts to remove weeds.

We recognise the growing concern about using chemical methods to control undesirable plant species. We are committed to reducing their use on Council managed land, whilst balancing the need to support maintaining safe spaces for our communities.

BCP Council & legacy Councils have trialled alternatives and remain open to emerging solutions that can be used at scale, meanwhile continuing to learn and share best practice as Councils adjust their programmes.

We are aware of the PAN UK campaign, however a commitment to banning the use of all pesticides is not considered feasible at this time, balancing effectiveness and meeting the conurbations cost and resource constraints for the circumstances where they are currently in use.

We do need to keep challenging ourselves on this.

Public Question from Philip Stanley Watts

Will the cabinet member please specify how many heritage assets BCP council is responsible for?

Also is poole civic centre one of these heritage assets?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox

Based on the Asset Register BCP Council is responsible for four heritage assets, Poole Civic Centre is not one of them. For reference however, the four heritage assets are: -

- The Caro sculpture and viewing platform
- Baden-Powell monument
- Christchurch Quay place Mill 1
- Christchurch Quay Place Mill 2

Public Question from Sarah Ward

BCP council's civic apparatus are demonstrably not fit for purpose – recently leaving the council unable to review its twinned status with a town in the apartheid state of Israel - currently under investigation at The Hague

for genocide, with a reported death toll exceeding 100k across Palestine and Lebanon. Can you assure the public that the governance review will not prevent the urgent action needed to ensure the council can and will act swiftly in accordance with ICJ rulings and therefore not risk complicity in supporting war crimes?

Public Question from Feda Shanin

Considering the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the illegality of Israeli settlements, how does the Council plan to ensure its compliance with international law in maintaining the twinning with Netanya? Other cities have paused or ended their twinning with Israeli cities in light of these legal and ethical concerns. Will Bournemouth follow suit and review or pause its twinning with Netanya?"

Public Question from Isabelle Hargreaves (Read by Diane Magnetico)

Israel is committing plausible genocide in Gaza according to the ICJ. The prosecutors at the ICC have asked for the arrest warrants for at least 2 Israeli government officials, the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and the minister of defence, Yoav Gallant. Given the community concern over the twinning with Netanya in Israel, can the Council assure us that this matter will be addressed as a priority and with urgency in upcoming meetings? What steps are being taken to ensure this issue is considered promptly?

Public Question from Lisa Lobo

Can BCP council advise on how decisions on twinning arrangements are made within BCP structures, given the Charter of Trustees recently found it has no authority to make these decisions. Bournemouth is twinned with an Israeli town, a state found guilty by the ICJ of: apartheid, illegally occupying Palestinian territory and breaches of international humanitarian law. It remains on trial for committing genocide. The ICJ/UN General Assembly also makes clear that we have a duty to impose sanctions on Israel for its ongoing breaches of IHL. Remaining twinned with Netanya risks complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Public Question from Charlie Burt

Given the ongoing investigation into Israel for potential acts of genocide by the ICJ, why does Bournemouth continue to maintain its twinning relationship with Netanya? How does the council justify this partnership in light of such serious allegations, and has any consideration been given to reviewing or suspending this twinning agreement?

Public Question from Bashar Alsayyed (Read by Bilal Yasin)

1 - Given the growing community concern over the twinning with Netanya, can the Council assure us that this matter will be addressed as a priority and with urgency in upcoming meetings? What steps are being taken to ensure this issue is considered promptly?"

2- How does the Council plan to address the ethical concerns raised by the community about the twinning with Netanya, considering the ongoing human rights violations in the region? Will this issue be reviewed in light of Bournemouth's commitment to international justice?"

3- Can the Council confirm if there was a public consultation before the twinning with Netanya was formalized? If not, will the Council consider holding one to gather the views of Bournemouth residents on this matter?"

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

Following the motion to de-twin having been received to be considered by the Bournemouth Charter Trustees, we have been obtaining legal advice on the allocation of responsibility for Twinning between the Charter Trustees and BCP Council. We are anticipating that that his advice will be able to be issued to the Charter Trustees in the next few weeks and that this will give clarity about where this responsibility lies. Once we have confirmed that, it will be open to the appropriate body to consider the issue.

Public Statement from Diana Butler

Poole residents are not being consulted on the important issue of Poole Civic Centre. Just 2 weeks ago - BCP Cabinet voted 9:1 to sell this beautiful Grade 2 Listed building with decorative interior and central courtyard.

The Dorset Coroner is seeking a home, as Bournemouth Civic provision proved inadequate. Poole Civic Centre would be a well positioned, fitting venue with easy access, parking and good transport links. Poole Charter Trustees could use the Chamber at agreed times - saving proposed expense and alteration to Poole Guildhall.

Funds from the sale of Bournemouth Town Hall Annexe could be allocated to Poole Civic Centre - enabling scope for multi-use (like Southampton Civic) and potential for regular income. This would benefit Poole, the Council and the wider community - with space for Coroner services, room rental, exhibitions, events, training and hospitality.

The adjacent annexe site could be discussed separately.

Public Statement from Philip Gatrell (Read by the Chief Executive)

Following public issues at full Council and Audit and Governance Committee meetings this year:

- To conform with her previous practice, the Monitoring Officer will doubtless necessarily soon rectify an oversight by amending the Constitution to state correctly that Officer's "1989 Act" duties. Including reporting actual contraventions of law to each Member.
- Hence ensuring Members' awareness via the Constitution regarding Council's self-regulation by primal legislation. Likewise, individual Councillors' ultimate responsibility concerning Officers' material failures that define governance weakness.
- **Thus preventing damaging contraventions hitherto passing seamlessly and unchecked from Administration to Administration. For example -**
- Not reporting the performance bellwether of "1974 Act" Ombudsman case decisions concerning maladministration and service failures.
- Not reporting "2014 Act" and "2015 Regulations" breaches concerning, respectively, local electors' accounting information rights

and Council's inadequate fixed assets records.

- Potentially penalty bearing breaches of a basic tax regulation concerning agency Senior Officers - acknowledged to me 30 September 2024.

Public Statement from Robin Ede

"I am here to try and raise the profile and perception of Highcliffe-Walkford which seems to have been forgotten,

It has the first sandy beaches west of Southampton, is a well-loved beauty spot but is let down by cliff paths with scree slipping away underfoot and embarrassingly disgraceful toilets. it needs much TLC

If the former removed steps to the cliff top were replaced, it would improve the facilities for elderly residents and visitors alike and enhance the area. It would also be wonderful to take a short stroll using the steps to walk in a circular manner without using the roadway - a god send to the dog walking community.

I am suggesting the steps are replaced with a majestic style noting your new BCP Council custodianship, the regency designed steps representing the main entrance gateway to BCP using a little "Capability Brown" foresight and imagination !"

Public Statement from Antoinette Jones read by Lisa Weir

As BCP council's policy 'recognises that people have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect' and '...will not tolerate unjust, unfair, or unlawful discrimination', one would expect this to also apply to who the council twins with.

Netanya is part of a state that has oppressed and discriminated against the Palestinian population.

On 19 July 2024 the ICJ declared Israel guilty of apartheid and affirms the legal obligation of all states to end complicity in Israel's gross violations of human rights.

Remaining twinned with a town that does not respect the rights of all, results in Bournemouth being complicit, which questions Bournemouth's commitment to their values and is quite damning.

Being critical of the actions of Israel is not antisemitic, and it is dangerous and harmful to conflate the two, as many Jewish people do not support the oppression and discrimination of the Palestinian people.

Public Statement from Nick Greenwood read by the Chief Executive

'I urge you to consider expanding the word limit for public statements during Council Meetings from the current 150 words to at least 300 words.

This change is essential as the current restriction significantly hampers genuine freedom of expression and undermines the very purpose of soliciting public opinion.

The BCP has garnered a reputation for inadequate consultation with local residents, and increasing the word limit would be a meaningful step toward improving this perception. Additionally, I understand that support for the

United Nations Agenda 2030 guidelines may not resonate well with the community.

It appears that there is a tendency to limit feedback that could reveal concerns about this agenda. By fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue and longer statements, you would not only enhance transparency but also demonstrate a commitment to truly listening to the voices of the public. Such changes are vital for rebuilding Public trust.'

28. Petition - Preserve the Biannual Hush Club Event in Southbourne

Consideration was given to a petition calling for BCP Council to preserve the Biannual Hush Club Event in Southbourne.

The petition organiser, Mr Bob Smith-Thomas, provided Council with background relating to the submitted petition, and in doing so read a statement from the organisers of the Hush Club.

Members spoke in support of the event thanking the petition organiser for bringing the petition to Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson spoke on the petition highlighting that the Council had not banned the Hush Club event nor had any legal action been taken, but that Environmental Health staff had been liaising with the event organiser following a large number of noise complaints (45 separate noise complaints received since 2021) which the Council has a statutory duty to investigate.

Further to this the Portfolio Holder advised that should the Hush Club wish to continue the event they would need to apply for a temporary event notice, the process followed for previous events, and that if there were objections to the event from the police or council based on previous history the application would be heard at a Licensing Committee for the members to consider and make a decision.

Councillor Kieron Wilson proposed that: -

Council notes the petition and the strength of feeling within the community and asks that it be referred to the Licensing Committee'

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Millie Earl.

Council debated the petition and it was:

RESOLVED that Council notes the petition and the strength of feeling within the community and asks that it be referred to the Licensing Committee.

Voting: Nem. Con (1 abstention)

29. Cabinet 4 September 2024 - Minute No. 39 - Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 Quarter One

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox presented the report on the Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 Quarter One and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that: -

- (b) the revenue budget virement set out in paragraph be agreed.**

Note – resolutions (a) and (c) were resolved matters by the Cabinet.

Voting: For:43, Against:0, Abstentions:21

Councillor Vanessa Ricketts left the meeting at 8.41pm.

30. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 55 - Poole Civic Centre

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

In proposing the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder for Finance proposed an amendment to recommendation (b) so that the recommendations read as follows: -

- (a) *note the confidential draft minutes and the recommendations of the Cross-Party Asset Disposal Working Group meeting held on the 20 September 2024; and***
- (b) *approve the open market disposal of the former civic centre in Poole on such terms to be approved by Cabinet based on a detailed report of bids received to support them in their decision making which includes social, environmental and financial benefits as well as compliance and respect for the Grade 2 listing and the BCP local plan.***

This was seconded by Councillor David Brown and debated as the substantive motion.

Comprehensive discussion took place with the following aspects being raised: -

- Previous agreements to accommodate the Mayor and Charter Trustees and the Coroners.
- Vertical slice of the original building to be retained.
- Heritage value of the building.
- £19,000 per month cost of retaining the building in its current state.
- Main building is Grade II listed and would therefore be required to be retained.
- BCP Local Plan states that any development proposals must firstly preserve or enhance the character and appearance of heritage assets and their settings including the listed civic building.
- Final sale figure shouldn't be decided by Cabinet but by Council.
- Concern with regards to the sale of Council assets.

Councillor Mark Howell proposed an amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Felicity Rice and sought to replace recommendation (b) so that recommendation (b) read as follows: -

- (b) *proceeds to market testing on the basis of disposal of the whole site and disposal of the site minus the vertically sliced civic function, and that the viability of retaining the vertical slice***

in public use incorporating the Poole Mayoralty function and potential community and coroner use be properly considered by the Council with any decision as to disposal being reserved to Council.

Council debated the amendment following which a recorded vote was requested, upon receiving the required support for a recorded vote the amendment as set out above was put to the vote and carried as follows: -

For: 35

Cameron Adams	Sue Aitkenhead	Hazel Allen
Sara Armstrong	Julie Bagwell	Stephen Bartlett
John Beesley	Philip Broadhead	Judy Butt
Patrick Canavan	Sharon Carr-Brown	John Challinor
Eleanor Connolly	Peter Cooper	David d'Orton-Gibson
Michelle Dower	Jackie Edwards	George Farquhar
Duane Farr	Anne Filer	Andy Hadley
Brian Hitchcock	Mark Howell	Alasdair Keddie
Sandra Mackrow	Gillian Martin	Jamie Martin
Pete Miles	Karen Rampton	Dr Felicity Rice
Joe Salmon	Kate Salmon	Tony Trent
Lawrence Williams	Gavin Wright	

Against: 26

Marcus Andrews	David Brown	Olivia Brown
Richard Burton	Adrian Chapmanlaw	Mike Cox
Lesley Dedman	Millie Earl	Matthew Gillett
Crispin Goodall	Jeff Hanna	Emily Harman
Richard Herrett	Paul Hilliard	Marion Le Poidevin
Rachel Maidment	Andy Martin	David Martin
Simon McCormack	Sandra Moore	Judy Richardson
Peter Sidaway	Paul Slade	Michael Tarling
Oliver Walters	Kieron Wilson	

Abstentions: 3

David Flagg	Margaret Phipps	Chris Rigby
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Following the recorded vote on the amendment Councillor Philip Broadhead proposed that the motion now be put directly to the vote, this was seconded by Councillor Judy Butt and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that Council: -

- (a) note the confidential draft minutes and the recommendations of the Cross-Party Asset Disposal Working Group meeting held on the 20 September 2024; and**
- (b) proceeds to market testing on the basis of disposal of the whole site and disposal of the site minus the vertically sliced**

civic function, and that the viability of retaining the vertical slice in public use incorporating the Poole Mayoralty function and potential community and coroner use be properly considered by the Council with any decision as to disposal being reserved to Council.

Voting: For:62, Against:0, Abstentions:2

Councillor M Howell declared an interest in this item as the Sheriff of Poole and Chair of the Civic Working Group and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

The meeting adjourned at 10.26pm and reconvened at 10.41pm.

Councillors Julie Bagwell, Olivia Brown, Judy Butt, David Flagg, Brian Hitchcock, Simon McCormack, Pete Miles and Margert Phipps left the meeting at 10.26pm.

31. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 59 - Community Governance Review of BCP Council area

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl presented the report on the Community Governance Review of BCP Council area and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Council were advised of the background and process of a Community Governance Review following which comprehensive discussion took place on the item.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) a Community Governance Review be conducted, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;**
- (b) the timetable and Terms of Reference for the Review, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report, be approved;**
- (c) the Director of Law and Governance and Head of Democratic Services be authorised to take all necessary steps in relation to the Review; and**
- (d) a Working Group be appointed to consider the Review and make recommendations to the Council comprising a total of 10 councillors, with a composition as set out in paragraph 18 to this report.**

Voting: For:44, Against:1, Abstentions:10

32. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 60 - Council Owned Companies Shareholder Governance Review

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Finance, Councillor Jeff Hanna presented the report on the Council Owned Companies Shareholder Governance Review and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

In proposing the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance proposed an amendment to recommendation (a) so that the recommendation read as follows: -

- (a) **Approve the Shareholder Advisory Board and Shareholder Operations Board Governance Framework for inclusion in the Council's Constitution subject to the replacement of 'be appointed' with 'normally be nominated' into the final paragraph of 1.5.2 so as to read 'For clarification, BCP Councillors will not normally be nominated by BCP Council to Boards of Council Companies';**

Council consented to the amendment becoming the substantive motion and debated the recommendations as amended in detail with some members expressing concern with Councillors not being appointed to the Boards.

Following comprehensive debate, the recommendations were carried as set out below.

RESOLVED that Council: -

- (a) **Approve the Shareholder Advisory Board and Shareholder Operations Board Governance Framework for inclusion in the Council's Constitution subject to the replacement of 'be appointed' with 'normally be nominated' into the final paragraph of 1.5.2 so as to read 'For clarification, BCP Councillors will not normally be nominated by BCP Council to Boards of Council Companies';**
- (b) **Approve the Guidance to Councillors and Officers Appointed to Outside Bodies for inclusion in the Council's Constitution; and**
- (c) **Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to ensure the Council's Constitution remains up to date in respect of these documents.**

Voting: For:35, Against:15, Abstentions:2

Councillors S Bartlett, D Brown, M Earl, D d'Orton-Gibson, M Howell, A Martin, S McCormack, J Salmon P Sidaway, and K Wilson declared interests in this item and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown left the meeting at 11.25pm prior to the vote on the item.

Councillor Emily Harman left the meeting at 11.37pm.

33. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 61 - Hawkwood Road Community Centre - Towns Fund Masterplan

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson presented the report on the Hawkwood Road Community Centre – Towns Fund Masterplan and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

In proposing the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services proposed an amendment to recommendation (3) replacing and splitting the recommendation into two parts so that it read as follows: -

- 3) (a) ***Approval of the build works contract to the in-house Construction Works Team (subject to capacity and acceptable budget compliance) or award of contract to an external main works contractor for demolition of the former WH Smith building and/or newbuild community centre;***
- (b) ***Delegation to relevant Service Director to undertake an external procurement process to select a main contractor for works should the in-house team (CWT) not be able to comply with the budget and/or have insufficient capacity;***

Council consented to the amendment becoming the substantive motion and debated the recommendations as amended.

Councillor Joe Salmon proposed a motion as per 11.1.15 of the Constitution that the meeting be now adjourned, this was seconded by Councillor Cameron Adams.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the motion would be withdrawn and that items of business of an urgent nature be dealt with prior to the motion being put. It was agreed that the current item be dealt with, and that the meeting would then move onto and debate Agenda Item 13 (Cabinet 2 October 2024 – Minute No. 63 – High Needs Scholls Grant Expenditure Forecast) prior to adjourning.

Councillors Hazel Allen, Michelle Dower, Anne Filer and Rachel Maidment left the meeting at 11.44pm.

Debate then returned to the current item where the recommendation as amended was carried as set out below.

RESOLVED that Council: -

- 1) **approves the demolition of the former W H Smith building (625 Christchurch Road), the creation of the new pedestrian boulevard and the construction of the new Community Centre and associated hard and soft landscaping for a total scheme cost of £4.1m;**
- 2) **approves the financial strategy for the scheme as set out in paragraphs 11-22 with specific approval for the use of £4.1m of Towns Fund grant funding to pay for the delivery of the Community Centre;**
- 3) (a) **Approval of the build works contract to the in-house Construction Works Team (subject to capacity and acceptable budget compliance) or award of contract to an external main works contractor for demolition of the former WH Smith building and/or newbuild community centre;**
(b) **Delegation to relevant Service Director to undertake an external procurement process to select a main contractor for works should the in-house team (CWT) not be able to**

**comply with the budget and/or have insufficient capacity;
and**

- 4) approve the delegation to the Chief Operations Officer, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and the Director of Law & Governance authority, to enter into a contract for the building works, providing all key parameters (including delivery within approved capital budget) are met.**

Voting: For:48, Against:0, Abstentions:1

34. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 63 - High Needs Schools Grant Expenditure Forecast

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Councillor Richard Burton presented the report on the High Needs Schools Grant Expenditure Forecast and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council: -

- (a) Approves a further £16.5m increase in the forecast 2024/25 expenditure on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service. This brings the total funding forecast to £44.5m more than the grant made available by government as part of the dedicated Schools Grant; and**
- (b) Request the Corporate Director of Children's service to implement the further mitigation measures outlined in this report.**

Voting: For: Unanimous

Councillor Joe Salmon proposed a motion as per 11.1.15 of the Constitution that the meeting be now adjourned, this was seconded by Councillor Cameron Adams and agreed by the majority of members.

Councillor George Farquhar requested that his vote against the motion to adjourn the meeting be recorded.

The meeting was adjourned at 00.13am

Reconvened Council Meeting – 4 November 2024

In opening the reconvened meeting on the 4 November 2024 the Vice-Chairman welcomed Councillor Toby Slade who had been elected onto the Council following the recent Muscliff and Strouden Park by-election.

The Vice-Chairman also advised council of the sad passing of Ron Parker, former Councillor, Mayor and Sheriff of Poole. In relation to this the Vice Chairman advised that formal tributes would be paid at the next council meeting where a spoken tribute would be given in memory of Ron Parker.

35. Cabinet 2 October 2024 - Minute No. 62 - Constitution Hill Road, Poole, Dorset, BH14 0QA

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl presented the report on Constitution Hill Road, Poole and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the item with members speaking on the proposals contained within the report.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1) Approve a further £995k for design, planning and demolition of existing buildings;**
- 2) Approve the delegation to the Chief Operations Officer in conjunction with the Director of Finance and the Director of Law & Governance authority to enter a contract for demolition providing all key parameters (including delivery within approved capital budget) are met;**
- 3) Appropriate the site for housing purposes under section 19 of the Housing Act 1985; and**
- 4) Transfer the site to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) from the General fund at an appropriate certified value of the land.**

Note - resolution 5 was a resolved matter by the Cabinet.

Voting: For: Unanimous

36. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor Stephen Bartlett 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.

Council was asked to consider the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council.

Council was advised that there is a requirement to report on the work of O&S to Council to ensure good visibility of the function of and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required.

Council was informed that the annual report contains a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2023-24, reflections on working practices and an action plan identifying strategic improvements to the O&S function, and that in relation to this all O&S Committees received the annual report for consideration, providing opportunity for comment prior to the supply of the final report to Council.

Thanks were expressed to the officers and chairs of each of the scrutiny committees.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1. Council considered and commented on the annual report and associated action plan; and**

2. Council approved the proposed minor revisions to the O&S committee structure illustrated at figure 1b within this report.

Voting: For: Unanimous

37. Questions from Councillors

Question from Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty

Several residents have raised concerns about the increasing amount of dog faeces in public areas, including parks, pavements, and particularly Kings Park Cemetery. One resident highlighted the issue by sharing that her sight-impaired mother regularly steps in excrement while visiting her husband's grave. She has faced verbal aggression when challenging dog owners and has raised complaints to the council but has not received a satisfactory response.

Could you provide information on how long it has been since the bylaws enforcing dog owners to clean up after their pets expired? Additionally, when can we expect new bylaws to be implemented to address this issue?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore

In Bournemouth, dogs were historically prohibited from entering council-controlled cemeteries as part of a 2011 Bournemouth Borough Council control of dogs order under the Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act 2005. However, in Christchurch and Poole cemeteries, this legislation was not taken up and dogs were permitted access to open space including cemeteries.

This legislation lapsed in 2017 and was replaced in 2020 by PSPO Public Space Protection Order legislation.

Under a PSPO, and when an offence is witnessed, local authorities can issue a fixed penalty fine of up to £100 to those who fail to clean up after their dog in public. This fine could be increased to £1000 by a magistrate's court if a person refused to pay.

Fortunately, most dog owners act responsibly and remove any fouling.

It also needs to be mentioned that these orders require evidence gathering, mapping, legal input and consultation etc all of which takes time and money.

However, work to review, implement and enforce a PSPO is on the forward plan to be explored in the future. But in the meantime, we are of course, asking the minority of dog owners responsible for failing to clean up after their animals to respect the public open spaces they access, to be considerate to other users and pick up after their dogs.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty

I am just wondering what to say to my residents in the meantime.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore

I sympathise with the situation, but I will be looking to see what we can do to move this forward. It is currently work in progress.

Question from Councillor Mark Howell

Councillor Howell requested that his question be carried over to the next meeting of the Council when the Chief Executive would be in attendance.

Question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

‘Can an update be given on the position with Kings Park Nursery in terms of what has happened with the site since the decision to close it and what the plan is for the future?’

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore

The Kings Park plant nursery site has just come into my Communities portfolio.

Expressions of interest to take on the entire site with the existing users (Tricuro and Linwood School), in situ on a lease arrangement for a period of 25 years with a break clause after 10, 15 and 20 years was sent out following input from Legal, Estates, Environment and Communities.

A range of groups came forward and 3 expressions of interests for the full use of the site were received. These were reviewed based on the following

- Approach to the financial operation and business plan of the site
- Outline of organisational structure, experience
- Community and social benefit from use of the site
- Sustainability of future use

We are now working with a preferred partner to explore options for the plant nursery site while they seek funding for resourcing. The development of a lease arrangement for the site can then progress.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

I'm sure Councillor Moore will recall when the decision was taken to close the nursery, the amount of money in savings in Virgin Commerce was quoted, and as part of that, an allocation of money was set aside to enable the transfer of this facility to the community. I wonder if you could explain what has happened with that money and whether that transfer is going to be enabled. Thank you.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore

Thank you for that. I don't have the answer. I will look into it and give you a written reply.

Question from Councillor Joe Salmon

“In the Financial Outturn 2023-24 report to O&S Board on 16 July 2024, it was highlighted that there has been an unexpected pressure on parking income as a result of high charges from card transactions. Given this it is

more urgent than ever we look at this decision. I have yet to receive the evidence base that was used by the administration to make this change. Yet again I am asking for this to be shared, and for the decision to potentially be reviewed and overturned if this is in the best interests of residents, but practically and financially”

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox

The decision to move to cashless terminals in BCP car parks was taken in early 2019 (pre-covid) in response to high levels of theft from car parking machines and the increasing costs to repair or replace the damaged equipment.

In response certain other services they moved to cashless as a direct response to the global covid19 panic and the position was not reversed as the situation has eased.

At this stage card payments remain the most cost-effective payment method as the cost of collecting, counting, and banking cash is significant and not without risk.

Just as an example cash represents 12% of our parking income, yet it represents 56% of our costs related to collection, and that does not include staff costs aswell. It is recognised of course that the use of cash is a symptom of financial exclusion; therefore, the use of cash is being reviewed on a service-by-service basis. It may also be useful to highlight that the council is increasing the use of PayPoint locations.

The opportunity to expand the PayPoint counter service to Bournemouth has recently been taken thereby enabling more residents to pay their council tax bills (with cash) at more convenient and accessible locations such as their local corner shop.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Joe Salmon

I'd love to see the working, you know? I just want to see the numbers. I just want to see, here you go, Councillor Salmon, this is what it cost in 2019, because having a fix of a broken payment machines, this is how much it's costing now. I just want to see the working and the justification for the switch. That's all I want, just for numbers.

It doesn't have to be right now, obviously, but at some point I would love to see it. You don't get to... Oh, no, you do. I'm reluctant at the moment, but

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox

I will see where the figures come from and I'll get back to you. But if I can, I will do.

Question from Councillor Sara Armstrong

“In light of the recent anniversary of the tragic murder of Cameron in the town centre and it also being a year since BCP passed our Knife Crime Motion.

Please can council receive an update on the progress being made to ensure that every family and community in BCP should be safe from the loss of a life due to knife crime?

How is the council measuring up against all of the actions we resolved to take last September?

I am especially concerned about the progress being made regarding the implementation of the serious violent crime duty and the resources available to enable the council to deliver it in the longer term.”

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson (Read by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl in Councillor Wilsons absence)

The BCP Community Safety Partnership’s Serious Violence Strategy, was adopted in January 2024, and we are now ten months into the new duty for Serious Violence and making good progress. The campaign #livesbeforeknives #changesaremade to raise awareness of knife crime ran between May and September and included, a range of activities for young people, parents and carers and professionals to educate and provide support around knife crime. This includes working with partners including AFC Bournemouth, Town Centre BID, Dorset Police, Community Champions and the community and voluntary sector in a Public Health approach to address crime. Dedicated Task & Finish groups focus on specific activity such as the Young Person’s Serious Violence group which aims to look at safeguarding vulnerable young people from harm and or exploitation.

The key priorities for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area under the Serious Violence Strategy are to reduce:

- Sexual assaults and rape
- Robbery
- Domestic Abuse
- Violence Against the Person which includes knife crime

There has been a wide range of community safety activity take place over the last 12 months focussing on reducing serious violent crime which includes the Unity Promise, Keeping our Young People Safe Conference and Purple Flag accreditation. I’ll send over some further details rather than go through them all here.

In terms of how we measure and monitor progress, overall, there has been a decrease in Violence Against The Person reported occurrences in Q1 compared to the same period the previous year, with a total reduction of 10.7%.

The Community Safety Partnership produces quarterly KPI reports which are reviewed by the CSP Executive Board along with monthly reports on serious violent crime. They also produce an annual report which is presented to Overview & Scrutiny in December of each year to ensure that there is scrutiny of the partnership activity.

The funding for the Serious Violence Duty, the Domestic Abuse Duty and the Safer Streets funding is currently only committed by the Government until 31st March 2025. We continue to lobby central government through the Local Government Association and the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset for long-term sustainable funding to carry out this vital work, however as yet no funding has been confirmed.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sara Armstrong

I have got a number of issues to follow up, but I'll stick with this one. So this week I received a message from one of my residents who described a situation that had happened in the town centre with a group of young people where a young man was stabbed.

So there is still, I think, a perception that there is more that we can do and there's more that we can be doing with the night-time economy and how we work with those clubs and bars to keep knives out of the clubs.

Although we are making progress in terms of reducing the amount of the knife crime, the people impacted by knife crime are younger in terms of perpetrators and victims. Councillor, are you going to a question?

My question is, what are we doing to engage with the night-time economy and to ensure that they have the right equipment to be able to detect knives? And also, what are we doing to ensure that young people were intervening much earlier with them to prevent this? Thank you.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

Thank you, Councillor Armstrong. I'm really sorry to hear that someone was stabbed in the town centre it is always a tragedy when these things happen. I'm not convinced that the clubs are necessarily the problem when it comes to detecting knives in fact we do have a good relationship across the night-time economy and we want to continue encouraging them to report and we know that they take that seriously, particularly through our work on things like the Unity Promise and also the Purple Flag accreditation.

I think that what we probably need to be doing more of is working with our police partners and partners across the town centre around tackling maybe younger groups below club age because I think that that's where a lot of the problem sits around knife crime, especially for children and young people who are understandably really scared of this issue and don't have the protection of the clubs to go to in many ways, so are out on the streets in the evenings. However, absolutely, I think we need to all work together. I think we do recognise through the community safety partnership this isn't just a council problem, it's not just a police problem, it's not just a night-time economy problem, it's everyone's problem to tackle.

We'll continue to do that and hopefully get some additional funding in the long term to be able to address some of these issues, especially amongst youth tackling youth violence in general. Thank you.

38. Notices of Motions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

Council was advised that three motions had been received on this occasion.

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Duane Farr and seconded by Councillor Hazel Allen.

In moving the motion Councillor Farr referred to amended wording to the motion which had been submitted by Councillor Patrick Canavan which amended the motion to read as follows: -

‘There has been no scrutiny of the decision to close Bournemouth’s only Women’s Refuge for those fleeing abusive relationships. We ask that the decision be reversed and the council’s policy on social care for vulnerable individuals escaping domestic violence must be fully scrutinised before committee examined as part of a cross-party working group to be established to oversee the finalisation of the Safe Accommodation and Commissioning Strategy, reporting to the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2025.’

Councillor Farr advised that the wording had been accepted by himself as the proposer and the seconder of the motion. Council agreement was sought to confirm the amendment as the substantive motion which was subsequently carried without dissent.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the item following which it was:

RESOLVED that there has been no scrutiny of the decision to close Bournemouth’s only Women’s Refuge for those fleeing abusive relationships: -

the decision be examined as part of a cross-party working group to be established to oversee the finalisation of the Safe Accommodation and Commissioning Strategy, reporting to the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2025.’

Voting: For: Unanimous

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Joe Salmon and seconded by Councillor Oliver Walters.

This Council believes that the current First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system used for local elections does not fully reflect the diverse political preferences of our electorate. We propose that the Leader of the Council contacts the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and requests that BCP Councils 2027 local elections are used as an opportunity to trial an alternative Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

Background:

1. Electoral Fairness:

- The FPTP system often results in disproportionate representation, where the distribution of seats does not accurately reflect the share of votes each party receives.
- STV is a proportional representation system that aims to allocate seats more fairly, ensuring that the majority of votes contribute to the election outcome.

2. Voter Empowerment:

- Under FPTP electors are frequently pressured to vote for candidates they do not favour out of fear of one they dislike even more being successful.

- Under FPTP any votes cast for the candidate who is not successful are simply ignored.
 - STV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, reducing wasted votes and empowering voters to express nuanced preferences.
3. Encouraging Positive Campaigning:
- FPTP can encourage negative campaigning as parties focus on winning narrow pluralities.
 - STV incentivizes positive campaigning, as candidates must seek not only first-choice votes but also second and third preferences from a broader electorate.
4. Successful Implementation Elsewhere:
- STV is already successfully used in several other democracies and in various elections within the United Kingdom, such as the Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections in Scotland.

Proposal:

1. This Council instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government requesting that legislation be passed to allow the trial of STV in the 2027 local elections noting that BCP Council would be happy to pilot STV.

Comprehensive debate took place on the motion with members speaking both for and against the proposal to trial an alternative Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

RESOLVED that: -

this Council instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government requesting that legislation be passed to allow the trial of STV in the 2027 local elections noting that BCP Council would be happy to pilot STV.

Voting: For:30, Against:19, Abstentions 4

Councillor George Farquhar requested his vote against the motion be recorded.

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Philip Broadhead and seconded by Councillor Cameron Adams.

Council Notes:

- **The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.**
- **The estimated impact of this decision, which in the BCP Council area alone could see 75,627 pensioners lose their fuel allowance, and which Age UK says will mean 2 million**

pensioners across the UK who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.

- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of the BCP Council area and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across the BCP Council region sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- (a) Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- (b) Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- (c) Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- (d) Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible

pensioners across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are supported in claiming their entitlement.

Councillor Richard Herrett proposed the following amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor Martin and sought to add an additional point to the beginning of the notes section which read: -

‘the extremely difficult financial position that local and national government has been left in due to the recklessness of previous Conservative administrations’

With the remaining wording staying the same so that the notes section read:-

Council Notes: •

- ***The extremely difficult financial position that local and national government has been left in due to the recklessness of previous Conservative administrations***
- ***The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.***
- ***The estimated impact of this decision, which in the BCP Council area alone could see 75,627 pensioners lose their fuel allowance, and which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners across the UK who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.***
- ***The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of the BCP Council area and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing ‘heat or eat’ dilemmas and safeguarding health.***
- ***The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health***
- ***The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.***

Council debated the amendment, following which the proposed amendment was put to the vote and carried with voting:

For:24, Against:14, Abstentions:13

Following further debate an amendment was proposed by Councillor Philip Broadhead and seconded by Councillor Cameron Adams which sought to remove the notes section from the motion.

The amendment to remove the notes section from the motion was put to the vote and lost with voting:

For:21, Against:23, Abstentions:6.

A proposal was made in accordance with the Constitution by the proposer and seconder of the original motion Councillors Philip Broadhead and Cameron Adams that the motion be withdrawn.

Upon being put to the vote the proposal to withdraw the motion was lost with voting: For:18 Against:25, Abstentions:7

The substantive motion as amended was then discussed and following further debate the following amendment was proposed by Councillor Joe Salmon and seconded by Councillor Sara Armstrong: -

After “Council resolves to...”, delete points (a) and (d). Replace point (a) with:

- a. ***Request that before the application deadline of 21 December 2024, the relevant Portfolio Holder and Director send an appropriate, targeted, direct communication to all BCP residents over the age of 65 who are in receipt of Council Tax Support or other means tested benefits of which the local authority is aware, advising them of the changes to the winter fuel allowance and providing them with information as to how to check their eligibility and, if eligible, apply for pension credit in order to retain the fuel allowance.***

So that the Council resolutions section of the motion be amended to read: -

Council resolves to:

~~(a) ***Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.***~~

- (a) ***Request that before the application deadline of 21 December 2024, the relevant Portfolio Holder and Director send an appropriate, targeted, direct communication to all BCP residents over the age of 65 who are in receipt of Council Tax Support or other means tested benefits of which the local authority is aware, advising them of the changes to the winter fuel allowance and providing them with information as to how to check their eligibility and, if eligible, apply for pension credit in order to retain the fuel allowance.***

- (b) ***Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.***

- (c) ***Commit the Council to signing the ‘Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners’ petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.***

~~(d) ***Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are supported in claiming their entitlement.***~~

Following comprehensive discussion the amendment was put to the vote and fell with voting:

For:3, Against:44 , Abstentions:3

The substantive motion was then discussed and voted on as set out below.

Council Notes: -

- **The extremely difficult financial position that local and national government has been left in due to the recklessness of previous Conservative administrations**
- **The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.**
- **The estimated impact of this decision, which in the BCP Council area alone could see 75,627 pensioners lose their fuel allowance, and which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners across the UK who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.**
- **The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of the BCP Council area and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.**
- **The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health**
- **The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.**

Council believes:

- **That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.**
- **While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across the BCP Council region sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.**
- **The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.**
- **The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.**

Council RESOLVES to:

- (a) Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.**
- (b) Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.**
- (c) Commit the Council to signing the ‘Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners’ petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.**
- (d) Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are supported in claiming their entitlement.**

Voting: For:37, Against:0, Abstentions:15

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

Council was advised that no urgent decisions had been taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution since the last meeting of the Council.

The meeting ended at 21.31 pm

CHAIRMAN