

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 May 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr C Rigby – Chairman

Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Clements, Cllr J Martin, Cllr S Moore, Cllr Dr F Rice,
Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr B Chick and Cllr G Wright

Also in Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr R Burton, Cllr A Chapmanlaw,
attendance: Cllr M Earl, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley,
Cllr E Harman, Cllr M Howell and Cllr A Keddie

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Lisa Northover

2. Substitute Members

The were no substitute members

3. Election of Chair

It was agreed that Councillor Chris Rigby be Elected Chair for the municipal year 2024/25.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

It was agreed that Councillor David D'Orton-Gibson be elected Vice-Chair for the Municipal year 2024/25.

5. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

7. Public Issues

Please see Appendix A to these minutes in the Minute Book

8. Improvement of the environment in Poole Park through a trial closure of a park entrance to motor traffic

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Committee was informed that from 17 January 2024, BCP Council began a trial 24-hour daily closure to motor vehicles of one entrance / exit point in Poole Park.

On the same day the trial began, BCP Council launched a four-week consultation with the public, to understand the impact of reducing vehicles movements in Poole Park. The consultation results are considered in this report alongside other evidence, the strategic management of the park and the wider impact of a closure.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) on the closure confirmed that on balance there are no significant impacts on protected characteristic groups, including older people and those with disabilities. The public consultation did show that older people and those with a disability were more likely to disagree with the proposal. The purpose of the Cabinet report was to assess the strategic management of the environment within Poole Park and to seek a decision as to whether the trial arrangement and road closure shall be adjusted or made permanent.

A Ward Councillor stated that residents feel passionate about the closure and along with a fellow Ward Councillor in Parkstone had engaged with residents and delivered over 700 letters to those closest to the gate. It was mentioned that residents said there was increased safety for children and mobility scooters.

It was stated in Poole Town Ward it was a difficult issue as there was a lot of disagreement and campaigning in the area. Walking and talking to people in the park it was stated that more were in favour of keeping the gate closed than they were keeping it open. Not a lot of residents of Poole Town had gardens and felt the park was like their garden.

The report from DOTs had been read which listed how the closure of the gate effects the elderly and disabled, there were various issues raised. It was confirmed that DOTs was independent.

It was stated there was no perfect solution and a park should not be used for through traffic. It was also stated that it would be a positive step if adopted by the Council. Most people who visited the park and spoke to councillors said it was marvellous that it was closed.

Members of the Committee said they had received lots of letters from residents, although some were emotive, rude and unhelpful. Residents had stated that they drove through the park as they were unable to walk. It was also stated that the scenic drive was therapeutic and fulfilled psychological needs and the ability to drive through the park needed to remain.

It was stated that the park encompassed a lovely scenic view that should be protected. You cannot get the view anywhere else and it can be seen from the hospital.

It was stated that traffic levels dropped over the last 20 years as the number of offices on Parkstone Road decreased.

A compromise was suggested of only closing the gate at peak times but it was stated that it would be difficult to do and could cause conflict if intermittent closure was introduced.

RECOMMENDED that

1. Cabinet refer the matter to Full Council for decision.

Voting: 6 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions

9. Work Plan

The Chairman presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

The Chair invited the Overview and Scrutiny specialist to update the Committee. There was a request from a member of the public regarding the use of phosphates in Chemicals used for weed killing, it was explained that any scrutiny request received has to go to the next available meeting for the Committee to decide if it wishes to conduct further scrutiny.

The Joint Service Unit Head for Environmental services gave a presentation on weed killing, attached to these minutes.

It was highlighted that BCP had a statutory responsibility to ensure the highway was safe. BCP encouraged residents to support removing weeds along boundary lines. Only approved chemicals were used. Chemicals were not used in play areas and were applied directly to the weeds and not as blanket coverage.

The Committee decided that they wanted to keep an eye on this and have it added to the forward plan and the Chair would consult with officer about this.

The Forward Plan was divided into pre-cabinet and pro-active scrutiny. Reactive scrutiny may appear if required as issues arise.

It was noted that the Urban Forest Strategy will go to July Cabinet and to the Committee the week before.

The Forward Plan has been themed for meetings that are similar for example Climate and housing which was in the remit for the committee.

RESOLVED that

1. **the O&S Committee consider, update and confirm its Work Plan and agree to delegate to the Chair and Vice-Chair arrangements for the items.**

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN

Public Issues for Environment and Place O&S Committee – 15 May 2024 – 6.00pm

	Questions
1.	<p>A press release 30/11/23 entitled "People, Cycling & Walking to be prioritised in Poole Park", was released by Cycling UK following the Keyhole Bridge Judicial review challenges and remains live on their website.</p> <p>To date its contents, seem to remain undisputed.</p> <p>Please would the Committee research and advise on it's final bold bullet point headline statement: "Council will now need to confirm it's plan to prevent 'rat running' through Poole Park?"</p> <p>The specific question being is there an outstanding legal settlement obligation to provide traffic reduction on the Whitecliff road route regardless of public input, and can any informal agreement also be absolutely denied.</p> <p>Mr Justin Midgley</p> <p>Thank you for your question. The November 2023 press release from Cycling UK was not discussed with the Council before release. We did write to them to highlight inaccuracies in that press release.</p> <p>Cycling UK had raised an action against the decision of the previous portfolio-holder in respect of him failing to take account of the network duties of a Transport Authority as they apply to pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles. This has not been tested in court.</p> <p>The current administration distanced itself from the previous stance, and sought to reach a negotiated position with Cycling UK.</p> <p>The agreement did not include any legal settlement obligations regarding preventing "rat running" through Poole Park. We did outline the measures that had previously been trialled, and were under consideration, but categorically we made no agreement, formal or informal on this.</p>
2.	<p>As a local CIC Company and regular contractor to BCP, can the committee detail the basis of their confidence of truly independent advice from DOTS, given an already published end target?</p> <p>Is DOTS advice provided by its employees experience or via a survey group? If the latter, please details the selection and sampling process for this group and how survey bias is avoided in questioning and answer choice provisions?</p> <p>David Morgan</p> <p>DOTS is the Social Enterprise arm of of Access Dorset, a charity based within the BCP area.</p>

	<p>They provide independent accessibility surveys conducted by people with disabilities to a wide range of organisations, and are an authentic voice of people living with disability.</p> <p>The audit was conducted by 6 members of DOTS disability, all users of the park, with a range of disabilities.</p> <p>Given concerns raised by members of the public about access for the disabled, the Council team felt that the independent view from DOTS would go further than the Equalities Impact Assessment already undertaken to explore the reality for people living with disabilities.</p>
3.	<p>Of the limited (18) questions in the survey regarding closure of Whitecliff Road Entrance to Poole Park, only two provide data for respondents' "Purpose" and "Reasons" for using this entrance and others appear to be leading towards a closure result due to the way they are presented and/or due to the available options.</p> <p>Please could you answer the following:</p> <p>The "Purpose" question provides four options of passing through but only one generality of visiting the park - why is there an imbalance in these options? Would the following be other good reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . to take a break . for mental health <p>The "Reasons" question gives five emotively worded options in favour of closure before listing three more negatively worded options to retain the route - this appears to be leading bias and I would ask that the Committee consider if this is appropriate.</p> <p>Mrs Gabi Sanger-Stevens</p> <p>The questionnaire was designed to explore the factors that were changed by the single point closure.</p> <p>“Purpose” It is still possible to take a break in Poole Park, and the opportunities for mental health benefit are hopefully increased by the having less through traffic movements.</p> <p>It did not seem relevant to the team to list all the reasons people might visit the park, as this is unchanged.</p> <p>This question was not seeking to establish why people use the park, but more specifically whether and why they travel through the Whitecliff gate. The aim was to distinguish between those genuinely seeking to access the park (which may be for the suggested reasons) and those using it as a route to other destinations.</p>

	<p>"Reasons". The questionnaire invited people to highlight how the change impacted them.</p> <p>This question followed the Agree / Disagree question and asked what the reasons were for agreeing or disagreeing. The options given covered four possible reasons to agree (improve park environment, improve safety for park users, better environment for wildlife, fewer cars using park) and four possible reasons to disagree (concerns about air quality on the alternative routes, concerns about congestion, concerns about access to the park, wish to continue driving through).</p> <p>People don't disagree with proposals for a positive reason, they disagree because they think it will have a negative impact, hence three of the four 'disagree' reasons were described as concerns about possible negative impacts of the closure. The word 'concern' is the only emotive word used and is only needed on the negative options.</p> <p>There was also an 'other' reason box where respondents could write in their own reasons. 'Other' reasons given were for the most part specific examples of the given options, for example detailing specific places where respondents believe that congestion would arise. We do not agree that this was leading bias.</p>
4.	<p>In documents regarding the trial gate closure, and Heritage Fund Grant expenditure, the Council stated aims to 'improve safety' within the park, but more could be done, on consideration of the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -speed limit signage is inadequate, with only one circular sign on a lamp post at the Kingland Road entrance, none at the Civic Centre entrance, and no road markings between them. Any signage at the closed Whitecliff gate is ineffectual. -following resurfacing, the new raised speed humps are not as effective as the ones there previously, -to leave the disabled parking areas in the narrow road towards the Whitecliff gate, cars need to execute a 3+ point turn, -anti social behaviour could rise with no passing cars, and off-lead dogs have been seen harassing wildlife, -with just one exit point into Kingland Road there could be serious congestion. <p>Question - Can an urgent review of safety be undertaken?</p> <p>Ian Clarke</p> <p>The road safety within Poole Park will continue to be assessed, including any measures necessary following any changes to or confirmation of the closure.</p> <p>This will include a review of the need for a turning point, alongside the access requirements for non-motorised users, and signage encouraging slower speeds.</p>

	<p>The trial closure has not led to any known incidences or new safety concerns.</p> <p>Control of dogs off leads amongst wildlife is a challenge in all of our parks, and one of the reasons for creating the off-lying islands in the saltwater lagoon.</p> <p>Further design work has not been planned until the permanence or removal of the measure is finalised.</p>
5.	<p>Can the council explain what detailed data, based on empirical evidence, was collected in the six months prior to the temporary closure and the 4 months post closure that indicate closure is a necessity. Can they also explain how that evidence, if it exists, demonstrates it is acceptable to disenfranchise entire groups of people from using the park as they have in the past. Furthermore, can they also explain how they have attempted to mitigate the exclusion of any non-IT literate residents of BCP from awareness of and consultation about the temporary closure as, in many cases, these are the very people most affected since they are often elderly though not disabled.</p> <p>Karen Leahy</p> <p>The range of data and evidence gathered to support the work in Poole Park is clearly set out in the Cabinet report and accompanying appendices.</p> <p>Any changes will benefit some users, and inconvenience others, however, all groups are still welcome to use the park, and access by car is retained, people are not disenfranchised.</p> <p>The consultation was available in hard copy in BCP libraries and in The Ark café in Poole Park. The method of consultation followed standard BCP Council procedures.</p> <p>There was signage in the park from the beginning of January, and radio and press coverage, in attempts to make any regular park users aware of both the trial and consultation.</p>
6.	<p>I understand no accidents were recorded in Poole Park during its 135-year history. However, since the gate has been closed, several safety issues have arisen causing serious concerns.</p> <p>Motorists travelling through the park, from the Seldown Gate, get to the T-Junction and find they have no option but to effect U-Turns now this gate is closed. This is unsatisfactory and needs attention.</p> <p>Some families using gym equipment and female joggers say they don't feel safe in the park during the evening with less passing traffic; reluctantly they've stopped using the park at that time for their own protection.</p>

	<p>Cyclists and Scooters now travel faster thereby increasing the risk of injury to pedestrians.</p> <p>I raise these safety concerns because they only arose after the gate was closed and did not exist until the gate was closed. Surely opening the gate would improve safety in the park?</p> <p>Julie Caines</p> <p>On the absence of crashes, you understand incorrectly. There have been a number of crashes recorded in the park. One of these in 2015 resulted in a pillar of the Whitecliff gate being completely destroyed, and a 2 car collision in 2014 resulted in one car overhanging the lake. Two other incidents involved cars rolling across the pedestrian area into the lake.</p> <p>I have been made aware of one assault in the Park, in Jan 2016. Sadly there have been more in other parts of town, but they are rare.</p> <p>The only incident notified since closure was the driver of a Range Rover, believed stolen, ploughing into a tree near the gate last week.</p> <p>Ability to U-turn etc – This has already been answered in another question. Further design alterations to the park layout and signage will be considered depending on the cabinet decision.</p> <p>Safety of families and female users. The park is well lit and has various areas with natural surveillance from surrounding areas, as well as being a popular destination with significant footfall. The Council is aware of the comments about safety concerns and will consider this further depending on the outcome of the cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Cyclists and users of scooters should be considerate in their use of the park, the same as if they are on the highway or in any other public space. The Council will continue to consider the design of Poole Park to make it as safe as possible for all users.</p>
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	Statements
1.	"In Parkstone and Poole Ward two parties campaigned hard in the local elections against cycling improvements. They lost. Three public consultations and one visitor survey all support safer cycling and/or reduced traffic for this route. Another consultation is flawed by social media misinformation that the disabled had been shut out of Poole Park. In reality blue badge parking has increased and there is more road space for mobility scooters. You have the electoral mandate and public opinion is behind you. Will there be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Of course. Change, like childbirth, is painful.

	<p>But by standing firm on this you will leave a legacy to be proud of, the cleaner, greener, calmer Poole Park that we voted for".</p> <p>Susan Stockwell</p>
2.	<p>You have DOTS a private disabled company advising on Consultation, why? Where are the results?</p> <p>The Facts</p> <p>Wheelchair access is dangerous from extra traffic using the park roads as their turning space.</p> <p>There's no emergency access from the east or if the one exit becomes full with vehicles using the narrow road adjacent to the toilet block.</p> <p>There are safety concerns if a disabled person has an emergency incident near Whitecliff gate.</p> <p>There's been no recorded accidents. No legitimate reason for closure yet you put up bollards days after consultation finished. It will cost you nothing to reopen. There was never any danger to the public.</p> <p>The increased traffic flow and speed with nobody turning into the closed road is causing near misses that was once the roundabout in the park. Disabled rights must be addressed according to the law. A legal challenge will be submitted if closure goes ahead.</p> <p>Susan Lennon</p>
3.	<p>I walk in the park daily and it is used by my grandchildren.</p> <p>I want the park to remain closed to through traffic because:-</p> <p>There is far less pollution from cars driving through, most of which exceed the speed limit</p> <p>It is safer for the wild birds and little children in the park</p> <p>It is much more peaceful without through traffic</p> <p>Closing the park in this way does not restrict availability to the park to vehicle users wishing to use the park</p> <p>The primary purpose of the park is for the peaceful enjoyment of the residents and not as a through road for vehicle users.</p> <p>Mr W Jones</p>
4.	<p>I walk in the park daily and want the park to remain closed to through traffic because:-</p> <p>The primary purpose of the park is for the safe and peaceful enjoyment of the facilities and not as a through road for vehicle users</p> <p>The attractions for adults and children include play areas, soft play, bird feeding, mini train all of which make the park an attractive family venue</p> <p>There is far less pollution and it is safer for the wild birds and little children in the park</p> <p>Closing the park does not restrict availability to the park to vehicle users wishing to use the park.</p> <p>Mrs P Jones</p>

5.	<p>I'm a full-time, Poole-born, wheelchair user, spent lots of time in Poole Park.</p> <p>I don't drive and avoid car use but understand a car is sometimes necessary. I don't understand the anger about this. The arguments against the closure are nonsensical. Turning a car or pulling out of a gate isn't a problem for anyone safe to drive.</p> <p>I suffer with fatigue, but would never want to be driven through a park without stopping. The whole point of a park is that it's somewhere to spend time - not a drive through, it isn't McDonalds! Driving out the gate you entered is normal when visiting somewhere by car.</p> <p>Visiting is now a delight. There's bird song not the rumble of cars. I've been visiting more since the gate closed.</p> <p>It's back to being a People's Park!</p> <p>Local BCP Resident</p>
6.	<p>The piece of road that goes towards Whitecliff is now a safer road for Mothers with children, people on bikes, dog walkers, the disabled and wildlife that can walk from lake to lake, without risking being run over. I have spoken to boys on bikes returning home from school, who have commented how much safer they feel.</p> <p>In the evening we residents have noticed the park is now not used by youths to race their cars on the roads, to sit there revving their engines and at times driving over the grassed areas.</p> <p>Environmentally the park has benefitted from being quieter and as a consequence there is less pollution from fumes and traffic noise.</p> <p>As a by product of the closure there is less traffic going through the keyhole bridge, allowing the area adjacent to the model boat club to enjoy the benefits that we are enjoying in the park.</p> <p>Harry McAulay</p>
7.	<p>I am frequent user of Poole Park. Since the closure of the Twemlow Avenue entrance to the park, I have noticed a significant drop in traffic. The park is more peaceful and enjoyable for users. I have noticed more children cycling and scooting. I know from discussion with friends and neighbours that this is appreciated by many people. I would expect that the air quality has improved as well.</p> <p>Overall there has been no drop off in the number of people using the park and car parks, as there is still easy access for cars.</p> <p>I have also noticed that the keyhole bridge is used much less frequently by cars which is a great advantage to walkers, wheelchair users, scooters and</p>

	<p>cyclists. Twemlow Avenue is also less frequently used as a run through for traffic.</p> <p>I am extremely hopeful that the park gates will remain closed.</p> <p>Antoinette McAulay</p>
8.	<p>Compared to the rest of BCP, residents in Poole ward have less access to gardens and green space, deprivation is higher and car ownership is lower. Poole Park provides the green space many residents lack and is easily accessible for those who don't drive. With increasing population density in Poole town centre, more and more people will rely on the park to provide the outdoor space we all need.</p> <p>I've lived within walking distance of Poole Park for over 60 years and have seen how increasing levels of through traffic have changed the nature of the park. It had become more of a through road and less of a park. I appreciate some drivers see it as a scenic short cut but that should not be at the expense of all the residents who have a genuine need for access to healthy and safe outdoor space.</p> <p>Sue Smith</p>
9.	<p>There is no need to reiterate the Officer recommendation as the report is clear – it is in line with several BCP policies.</p> <p>This statement is to dispel mistruths.</p> <p>BH Active Travel did not campaign for this gate closure.</p> <p>There has been no lobbying.</p> <p>The closure was as much a surprise to us as to everyone.</p> <p>BHAT have never insinuated the gate closure was for cyclists. Indeed, our response focused on people 'in' the park, not those passing through.</p> <p>LPPA have made this a motorists vs cyclists issue, which it is not. Many emails received by BCP reiterate this with language such as 'fascist groups such as BH Active Travel'.</p> <p>Who threw council property into the lake? Who defaced council property in Whitecliff Road with graffiti?</p> <p>61% of Poole Town residents agree with the closure.</p> <p>80% of those who don't agree didn't give a postcode.</p> <p>Lucie Allen</p>
10.	<p>I am a resident who lives next to Poole Park and I am writing to support the continued closure of the gate in the park. My husband and I use the park regularly and as a wheelchair and ventilator user, I really feel that traffic has lessened in the park and general pollution improved which helps both people and wildlife. Less traffic means I can cross the road more easily and even get through the keyhole bridge to Whitecliff park safely. My view is that a park is a place to visit, park up in the car parks and bays and enjoy the facilities. It's not a place to be used as a cut through to save a few minutes on main roads.</p> <p>Ruth Kirk</p>

11.	<p>Please continue to keep local people safe whilst using Keyhole Bridge pathway.</p> <p>Since the closure of the Gates closest to Keyhole Bridge I have found walking there whilst going to Whitecliff with my 4 year old Grandaughter so much safer. As my son lives locally the reduction in traffic and the reduced pollution is noticeable.</p> <p>I am unable to come to the meeting, therefore I am writing here to request that a recording to Cabinet be made by the Committee to continue the gate closure.</p> <p>The people who access these green spaces will greatly benefit from this action.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Elizabeth Elwick</p>
12.	<p>Poole Park is our local park. It is the only park we can walk to, we visit almost every day with our dog. We strongly agree with the closure of Whitecliff Gate as it has significantly enhanced our visitor experience. Before the closure we actively avoided the park after about 3.30pm due to the almost nonstop stream of motor vehicles travelling through. Post closure, the area from the Ark to Keyhole bridge is being peacefully enjoyed by pedestrians.</p> <p>As part of the consultation, we engaged extensively with people walking in the park, almost all favoured the gate closure, a straw poll on our Glenair Neighbourhood WhatsApp revealed a similar finding with only one resident against. We understand the closure is inconvenient for people in Canford Cliffs and outlying areas, but primarily Poole Park should serve local residents and park users and in our view these groups support continued closure.</p> <p>David Colpman</p>
14.	<p>We live very close to the keyhole gate and use it frequently to access Poole Park, either on foot or on our bikes. We have two small children (2 and 4 years old) and they are either on their bikes or in the pram. During the closure of the tunnel to cars there was a much greater number of pedestrians and bikes using the road and it was a highlight of the outing for our eldest (he loves a tunnel!). In the current situation, there are plenty of aggressive drivers who intimidate us by driving right behind us as we walk / ride through or start to accelerate the second we exit the tunnel.</p> <p>Aggression aside, in the current climate of climate breakdown it is unfathomable that we are still pandering to car drivers - every effort should be taken to promote other, greener modes of transport.</p> <p>Marinel FitzSimons</p>
13.	<p>I would just like the committee to know what a wonderful decision they made to close all motor traffic through the keyhole bridge in Poole Park.</p> <p>Since then walking and cycling through the park into the town centre has been a joy even for a 74 year old retiree like myself.</p>

	<p>I would like this statement to be read out by an officer as I will not be able to attend in person.</p> <p>Xerxes Talati</p>
14.	<p>Rockley Watersports owns and runs a concession in Poole Park; we teach many school groups as well as hiring paddle boards, kayaks etc to the public. We also run the Dorset Games every year for over 1,000 children.</p> <p>It is too early in the season to say whether the gate closure will affect our business. My feeling is that it will not, as people who visit the park by car/van still have access to the car parks.</p> <p>I do however agree with the closure on the principle that Poole Park is an open green space, a park. Anything we can do to reduce motor vehicles in the park, particularly those passing through is a positive thing.</p> <p>I also believe the large groups of children we supervise (our set up is adjacent to the access road), will benefit hugely from less traffic, both from a safety perspective and an environmental one.</p> <p>Peter Gordon (Rockley Watersports)</p>
15.	<p>Since the entrance has been closed the park feels much safer and quieter. Motorists should not be using this as a rat run. Given the data shared in the recent report, this closure has had a negligible impact on congestion in other areas and I believe it should stay closed.</p> <p>David Cowie</p>
16.	<p>I fully support the continued closure of Poole Park to through traffic. Parks are recreational areas for everyone and should not offer a rat run for impatient drivers. Since the closure, the park continues to be very well used and is a joyous place to spend time in. Clearly children's safety is of huge evidence and seeing this family use increasing provides positive testimony to your current action.</p> <p>Bridget Esslemont</p>
17.	<p>As a walker and cyclist, preventing the rat run has been a huge bonus to my enjoyment of the park.</p> <p>The peace and tranquillity have been enormously appreciated.</p> <p>It's been such a pleasure seeing young families with children learning how to use their tricycles .</p> <p>As a car driver who regularly uses the main road , I haven't noticed any more traffic on it.</p> <p>All in all, it seems to be win win.</p> <p>Linda Charter</p>

18.	<p>The closure of the gates at Poole Park has stopped the park being used as a rat run by motorists keen to cut time off their journeys.</p> <p>The closure has greatly enhanced enjoyment of the park as an open space for walkers, runners, cyclists and families because it is safer.</p> <p>People can still drive into the park and leave their cars in the two car parks.</p> <p>Those with disabilities and those who are elderly are able to enjoy the park.</p> <p>It makes environmental sense to use the area as a park not a through road.</p> <p>Teresa Trafford</p>
19.	<p>As a daily user of Poole Park I have witnessed the positive changes in all aspects of the park's environment since its closure to through traffic. The ambience is now relaxed and calm and the wildlife more varied and visible; air quality has also improved considerably. As a cyclist, jogger and walker in the park, I have seen a noticeable reduction in the speed of motorists using the park and it has become an extremely pleasant place to visit with businesses thriving. Keyhole Bridge is also once again a much quieter and safer linking route. I therefore urge the council to make this closure to through traffic a permanent feature as in Kings Park and Meyrick Park. This trial has been a successful and proactive move to promote health, fitness, wellbeing, nature and environmental quality.</p> <p>Sally Webster</p>
20.	<p>My late wife was disabled and had to be pushed in her wheelchair. We loved the park but it used to scare us going through Keyhole Bridge. We felt so vulnerable to cars as there was no way we could escape if a car did not stop and there were some unhelpful drivers. We were constantly apprehensive and I felt forced to run through the bridge pushing the wheelchair to get to safety. During the earlier closure going through the bridge with the wheelchair was a totally different experience. There was no stress at all. It allowed us to use Keyhole Bridge in a relaxed and calm way rather than needing to treat it as a dangerous and hazardous area. The current arrangement has so reduced traffic that I can feel that same calmness when I walk through the bridge (albeit sadly now just on my own).</p> <p>John Revell</p>
21.	<p>I support the continued closure of the set of Poole Park gates closest to keyhole bridge. I use the park a great deal, sometimes driving down and sometimes walking. It is no hardship in a car to drive round to other gates. But I hugely appreciate as a walker being able to enter safely through keyhole bridge at my own pace.</p> <p>Deborah Zachary</p>
22.	<p>I'm a regular user of Poole Park, on foot, bike and occasionally car. There's been a big reduction in motor traffic since the closing of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue gate. Primarily because the Park can longer be used as a though route.</p>

	<p>This is a huge improvement for people using Poole Park for a place of relaxing and recreation. This has also created minimal traffic using Keyhole Bridge.</p> <p>Please can it remain this way.</p> <p>Michael Tarrant</p>
23.	<p>The officers' report is very thorough and balanced. Thank you for the time and effort that's gone into it.</p> <p>I've lived close to Poole Park for over 30 years. In spite of knowing it well I've been surprised by the difference made by the closure of the gate. It's a calmer environment, and easier for pedestrians like myself to navigate, not only in the park but also on Kingland Road and Seldown roundabout.</p> <p>The park remains well used and in good weather the car parks are full. Even so I've seen no evidence of the traffic congestion some have worried about.</p> <p>The park has been around now for over 100 years and we need to make sure it's fit for the next 100 and keeping the gate closed seems a sensible step forward.</p> <p>John Carter</p>
24.	<p>"The decision to extend the closure of Poole Park gate is a welcome one, and I fully support its continuation. Originally gifted to the public for their enjoyment, Poole Park should be a haven for pedestrians, cyclists, and families, not a thoroughfare for vehicles. The prevailing motonormativity in the UK is eroding our green spaces, but this extension stands as a small yet significant countermeasure. Living nearby, I've witnessed firsthand no impact on traffic flow since January, indicating that the closure does not disrupt daily commutes. Instead, it fosters a safer and more pleasant environment within the park, enhancing the quality of life for local residents and visitors alike. Let's preserve Poole Park for its intended purpose: as a tranquil retreat for all to enjoy without the intrusion of constant traffic."</p> <p>Iain Murray</p>
25.	<p>You'll have heard astonishing claims of discrimination, lower custom, no accidents, increased pollution, and that this scheme now contributes to lower mental health. Those with disabilities can still use the park (quite rightly), their cars are not disabled. Those using the park for their mental health can still do so (quite rightly), custom at the businesses clearly only come from those using the park for leisure, pollution is nominally the same but displaced outside of the park (quite rightly) and finally having been driven at by someone travelling too fast, claiming no reported road traffic incidents is morally bankrupt. What you won't have been told, and what can't be told, is the truth, which is, most opposed to the closure just want to be able to drive through in their cars ignoring the park, and using minorities to pedal their disgraceful propaganda. Keep it closed.</p> <p>Local BCP Resident</p>

26.	<p>In light of the data released 7th of May concerning Whitecliff gate closure consultation. The reopening of Whitecliff gate should be reconsidered by full council as the public voted for it to stay open by 63%. Also disabled people must have a voice in the community.</p> <p>The facts</p> <p>Wheelchair access is dangerous from extra traffic using turning space.</p> <p>There is no emergency access from the east and as highlighted recently the extra traffic is causing chaos already in the park. There are safety concerns if a disabled person has an emergency incident near the closed Whitecliff gate. It will cost you nothing to reopen the gate.</p> <p>Susan Lennon</p>
27.	<p>There is significant evidence in favour of retaining the closure. It is in line with a number of local and national policies and the Council's own LCWIP. With population density increasing it provides important access to the green space we all need.</p> <p>We understand some people had concerns regarding the impact of the closure and are reassured that the independent disability audit recommends the closure be retained. We are also reassured that traffic data shows a minimal increase in journey times when using the main road. Our own observations are that concerns over traffic congestion at the Seldown gate have proved unfounded and even on sunny weekends and holidays the gate has continued to function without problems.</p> <p>Given the weight of evidence in favour of the closure, and that the council has been so thorough in addressing residents' concerns, the appropriate decision must be to keep the closure in place.</p> <p>Sue Smith (Keyhole Bridge Group)</p>

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