

## THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR BOURNEMOUTH

Minutes of the Meeting held on 04 December 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr G Farquhar – Mayor

Cllr A Filer – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr A Filer (Deputy Mayor), Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr M Dower, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr M Gillett, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr A Keddie, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr L Northover, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr J Salmon, Cllr T Slade and Cllr L Williams

12. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Beesley, O Brown, Challinor, Farr, Hanna, Rigby, K Salmon, and Wilson.

13. Declarations of Interests

None.

14. Confirmation of Minutes and matters arising

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.**

15. Charter Mayor's Communications

The Mayor provided an update on his activities since the previous meeting, highlighting attendance at 63 engagements, including:

- Scout camp
- 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations
- Beating of the retreat at the Air Festival
- Opening of charity shops
- Graduations at various schools and universities
- Remembrance events
- Funerals for former Mayor Bob Chapman and Cllr Brian Castle.

It was noted that the Mayor's rescue dog Billy had accompanied the Mayor to many events and was to be considered his companion consort for the Mayoral Year.

16. Report of the Bournemouth Civic Working Group

The Chair of the Civic Working Group, Councillor Williams, presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report summarised the issues discussed at the Civic Working Group (CWG) meetings held since the last Charter Trustee meeting in July, focussing on work undertaken following receipt of specialist King's Counsel (KC) advice on the remit of the Bournemouth Charter Trustees (CT), including matters relating to twinning.

The specialist advice received had confirmed that the remit of the Charter Trustees was limited to:

- Appointing a Charter Mayor and Deputy Charter Mayor;
- Ensuring the safe custody of the Charter of Incorporation; and
- Acquiring, holding, administering, maintaining and improving historic property of a ceremonial nature.

As a result, the Standing Orders and Handbook were proposed to be amended to better reflect this advice. At the same time, it was felt that that there was an opportunity to tidy up the Standing Orders to clarify certain matters (such as the mechanism by which Charter Trustees could be removed, as set out in law.) The proposed amendments were set out in the report's appendices A-D and were recommended for approval.

Some Trustees raised concerns over a lack of clarity on which proposed changes were resulting from KC advice and which were 'tidying up' or additions for clarity. Some Trustees felt that they were unable to agree the proposed changes without first seeing the KC advice.

Honorary Clerk confirmed that the proposed changes resulting from the KC advice were mostly in section 1, with the amended Handbook reflecting those updates.

The Honorary Clerk and Mayor reminded Trustees that they had delegated authority to the CWG to review such matters and make recommendations accordingly. It was confirmed that the CWG had carefully considered the KC advice as supported by officers and while the request to see the KC advice was noted, the advice was protected by legal privilege and so could not be shared (though the honorary Clerk did provide some detail). Trustees were advised that the report of the CWG accurately reflected the KC advice and was sufficiently detailed to allow Trustees to determine the recommendations before them.

In response to a query on the strictness of the CT remit and the potential for the CT to take on tasks from the principal authority, Trustees were advised that the advice from the KC was that certain tasks or events previously managed by the CT, such as Remembrance events, were outside of its the remit. As a result, 2024 Remembrance events in Bournemouth and Poole

had been undertaken and paid for by BCP Council, with the Bournemouth and Poole Mayors invited to lead their respective events.

Trustees were reminded that the CT was funded by the Council Tax precept, with that money to be used for CT functions only. Were this money to be used for matters deemed outside of remit, the CT could be subject to a legal challenge.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved and seconded.

In response to ongoing discussion it was moved that the question be put. This was seconded and agreed by a majority.

Trustees accordingly moved to the vote and it was:

**RESOLVED: that  
Following acceptance of legal advice regarding the remit of the Charter Trustees, that the proposed amendments to the Standing orders and Handbook be approved.**

Voting: 18 F: 2 Ag (3 abstentions)

Councillor Northover left the meeting at 18:52.

17. Finance Update November 2024

The Responsible Financial Officer 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.

Trustees were advised that the forecast for the 2024/25 financial year was that the Charter Trustees of Bournemouth would underspend against the budget set. This was due to a lower than forecast spend to date on hospitality and events (such as Remembrance) and planned activity for the rest of the year being lower than originally envisaged. The forecast underspend for the year was £6,464.

Regarding the legal advice procured from King's Counsel (KC) it was confirmed that this was approximately £25k, to be shared evenly between the Charter Trustees of Bournemouth and Poole.

Reserves of just over £17k were being used to support the 2024/25 budget, with reserves forecast to decrease to a closing position of c. £86k.

Trustees were advised that a workshop on the budget for 2025/26 had been held in the previous week which had reviewed charges, the implications of the legal advice on the future budget, precept and Council Tax ahead of the budget setting meeting in early 2025.

The external audit for 2023/24 accounts had been completed with no issues. This was available to view on the Trustee website.

Trustees queried whether the KC legal costs were to be recharged from BCP Council and whether there was a charge for the initial incorrect advice received. In response, it was confirmed that the advice had been procured and paid for by BCP Council, with the costs to then be invoiced to the CT. There was no information available regarding whether the Council had been charged for incorrect advice.

Trustees queried the purpose of the £4.5k on civic regalia. This was confirmed to be for the procurement and upkeep of regalia. It was confirmed that officers were required to obtain 3 separate quotes for any spend over. £500.

**RESOLVED that:**

**The Charter Trustees note the in-year budget position for 2024/25 and other finance updates set out in the report.**

Voting: Nem. Con.

The meeting ended at 7.12 pm

MAYOR