

COUNCIL MEETING – 23 March 2021

Public Question from Chrissie Morris Brady

Why isn't the Council enforcing the law on non-permeable driveways? We get so much local flooding, which causes accidents. The water table is part of the climate catastrophe. I am tired of being laughed at for asking people to leave gaps on their drive when it is actual law.

Reply from Councillor Philip Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning and Deputy Leader of the Council

It is correct that planning permission is needed for any surface for a new or replacement driveway, more than five square metres in size, that is impermeable and would not allow for water to drain through. It is incumbent on the person wanting to install a new driveway to apply for permission if they want to use a non-permeable surface, which once submitted will be assessed under due statutory process.

Where planning permission has not been applied for but the driveway has gone ahead with a *non-permeable* material being used, then the Council's Planning Enforcement team will investigate the matter where they are made aware of such potential breaches. Without being aware of such potential breaches it is difficult for the Council to control the matter more than it does at present, but please be assured that the Council is upholding the law on this matter through use of its Planning Enforcement service.

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Public Question from Samantha March

The council is committing £250,000 to the BounceBack initiative, where “.....a particular focus will be on local professional and community artists.....” (BCP website) while undertaking major building works at the Aviary site in Bournemouth gardens on Westover Road.

This site has been a successful community driven marketplace for local creatives for decades. However due to covid they have not been able to sell for almost a year and you are intending to close the area during the peak trade period.

Will you delay until after the air festival or confirm a suitable alternative site for this Spring/Summer season?

Reply from Councillor Mohan Iyengar, Cabinet Member for Tourism, Leisure and Culture

The market won't be closing for construction during the peak period. Summer trading is important so the market and aviary will stay as-is and open through to early September, subject of course to Government rules around lockdown and easing. There will also be a spring-clean of the site before the summer starts.

But also I think most people would agree the market and the aviary need some improvement. The legacy here is that we have two different projects at different stages. One is a design for the market – modern and improved with ground-work and prefabricated stalls; this has gone through consultation and has planning consent. The other is the construction of the aviary, which is currently further along in its cycle. Ward councillors have been supportive and secured an allocation of neighbourhood CIL to the project, and discussions are continuing to secure the whole funding that's required.

If the funding can be delivered, we'll look to deliver both projects in as joined-up a way as possible, ideally with only one disruption and at the least sensitive time for trading as possible.

On the point about providing an alternative site at current rates, I think this question was asked on the assumption that summer trading would be disrupted by construction. It won't be, and when we get nearer to the real dates there will be a discussion about what's appropriate.

Finally, on the general point about supporting small businesses across the three towns, I think it's fair to point out that BCP Council has worked at considerable speed over the past year to expedite more than £125 million in grants and loans to, in particular, small businesses. Market traders have been able to claim grants to help them survive through the pandemic. We will also be introducing the so-called Bounce Back Challenge Fund, to which market traders can bid to support their activities and to improve pride in our towns.

More recently we announced the Festival Coast Live: A way to kick-start a whole range of activities that bring residents outdoors and visitors to our towns – precisely to support our local traders and organisations of all kinds. Specific sites and events are being coordinated through Festival Coast Live and the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the towns. I do encourage market traders to see what's available and get involved.

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Public Questions from Don Nutt

Question 1

'In your decision to reopen the Keyhole Bridge you argue that the extra traffic on Parkstone Road caused by the bridge closure to traffic, is significant enough to warrant its re-opening, because of the added diverted traffic and resulting additional congestion.

My question to Cllr Greene is as follows:

What specific actions are BCP council taking today to secure reduced traffic levels, congestion and traffic pollution on Parkstone Road today?

Reply from Councillor Mike Greene, Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability

A variety of work is ongoing that would influence future traffic levels - not just on Parkstone Road but across the whole conurbation. Locally we are progressing with design of an improved cycle and walking link through Whitecliff and Baiter Parks which will provide better connectivity Parkstone and Poole Town Centre. BERYL bike use and our current trial on e- scooters are going well with high and increasing ridership for both.

We are also delivering the Transforming Travel programme on key corridors which seek to provide a better local choice towards bus, walking and cycling trips as a first step, with some choosing to travel by these means as a result.

Question 2

In the last few weeks Grant Shapps the Minister of Transport has announced that the Government wants '50 per cent of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030.'

Government adviser Emeritus Professor Phillip Goodwin, of University College London, argues that this is achievable with a 1-2% per annum shift from car use to walking, cycling and public transport from now.

How does your decision on the Keyhole bridge square with this clear ambition of the Government to encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use?

Reply from Councillor Mike Greene, Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability

In line with Government requirements, we are developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). I have shared the work so far with Members and public engagement on it will start over the next few days. This will form the structure of our plans for the next twenty to thirty years and will, I believe, align very closely with the Government's hopes and plans as highlighted in the Department for Transport's publication of "Gear Change" a few months ago. As such it will leave us very well placed to secure significant future funding for the future towards a better network of cycle and walking provision.

The decision made to reopen Whitecliff Road near Keyhole Bridge was based on local evidence which was the subject of detailed scrutiny. I do not wish to go over the detail of that decision again as it is a matter of record. Suffice it to say that the principles and logic used in coming to my decision on Keyhole Bridge are precisely the same as those used in our pursuit of funding for Active Travel changes, including within the Transforming Travel programme.

To be clear, as outlined in my response to both of Mr Nutt's questions, I am satisfied that our authority is working well towards providing a future network that encourages a better balance between car-based demand and more sustainable modes of travel into the future.

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Public Question from Ian Clark

The Shack Café in Muscliff park was closed by BCP council a few weeks before the pandemic and the sports hall which was used by the local community was closed by the pandemic and has not been opened since.

Can BCP Council confirm what the intended use of these premises is going to be for and the date when this is likely to commence.

The Shack is a vital local community hub in the Muscliff area and if the premises are going to remain unused this summer could not the Café at least be opened as a pop up business.

Response from Cllr Mohan Iyengar

Muscliff Youth Shack is a youth service asset. The facility was indeed closed early in 2020 at the start of lockdown. Since then, nothing has changed in terms of the purpose of the building, although there's a recognition we have some under-utilised space and a keenness to see it used.

The re-opening of the centre will be keyed to the Government dates for lockdown-easing, though a definite date has yet to be fixed. This will be communicated in due course.

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Public Question from Phil Stanley

Emergency legislation allowing councils to meet online ends on May 7, 21. What plans have BCP concerning future meetings.

Reply from Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council

I would like to thank Mr Stanley for his question.

The Regulations apply to local authority meetings and police and crime panel meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7th May 2021.

The Association of Democratic Services Officers and Local Government Lawyer have issued a claim in the High Court for the continuation of local authority remote meetings beyond 6 May 2021, but the outcome is not yet known.

The Council is exploring a range of options for appropriate venues that could be used to enable meetings to be held if the current arrangements for virtual meetings are not extended.

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Statement from Phil Stanley

For those of us that have lost family and work friends during the pandemic many feel there needs to be a memorial garden to remember loved ones. It would be fitting if it was within the BCP area well known for its national award-winning gardens.