

# Appendix – Emails received

## Emails supporting closure



### BH Active Travel Consultation Response January 2024

#### Poole Park Whitecliff Gate Closure Trial

BH Active Travel and its 1400 members strongly **support the closure** of the Whitecliff Road Gate in Poole Park, to stop motorised through-traffic entering and exiting the park from this direction. In summary, we believe the benefits to all park users and those commuting through the park sustainably, of reducing motor traffic in the park, particularly through-traffic, outweigh the disbenefits of allowing through-traffic at Whitecliff gate.

We believe that the closure is in line with many **BCP Policies and Strategies**, which BCP Officers and Councillors should be looking to, when making strategic decisions such as this one.

Those policies and strategies include but are not limited to:

#### **BCP Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan**

Climate Action Strategy, Transport and Travel, to *'increase cycling and walking across the conurbation'*.

#### **BCP Corporate Strategy**

#### **Health and wellbeing Strategy**

#### **Green Infrastructure Strategy**

*'Parks are the lungs of our towns. They provide space for us to relax and play'. 'The 2021 Rethinking the Future of Parks and Green Spaces Survey told us that some of our key spaces, such as Poole Park could be improved by reducing the impact of traffic and vehicles'.*

#### **BCP Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).**

Poole Park is listed as a *'primary cycle route'* and is also in a *'core walking zone'*.

#### **Local Transport Plan (LTP 2011-2026)**

*'There are 7 key approaches with number 3 being Active Travel and greener travel choices. Creating attractive public realm and supporting infrastructure for walking and cycling'.*

## **Poole Local Plan (2018)**

### **PP24 Open Spaces and green infrastructure**

Chapter 10 Transport *'promoting sustainable, safe and convenient access where walking and cycling is prioritised'*.

### **Safer Routes to Schools Programme**

*'Promotes safer, more environmentally sustainable and healthier ways of getting to and from school'*. Poole Park is used by pupils from Poole High, Parkstone Grammar and Poole Grammar (among others) to avoid the busier and more dangerous routes along Sandbanks, Parkstone and Fernside Roads.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly,

### **Plan Vision for Poole Park**

The Poole Park Life Project (2017-2021 £2.7m National Lottery Heritage Fund) had several aims with one of the theme principles being to *'make it harder to drive through the park'*. In fact, it appears that the smoother road surface, reduced angle and longer raised tables and removing the roundabout, have increased the perceived speed of vehicles in the park and have not achieved the aims of the traffic management.

The Plan Vision for Poole Park aims *'to protect and enhance the historic landscape of Poole Park'* and most significantly, *'reduce traffic movement and vehicular intrusion in favour of pedestrian access and parkland character'*.

Allowing through-traffic, at the volumes experienced before the trial closure of the Whitecliff Gate, does nothing to support any of the policies and strategies of BCP Council, in particular the Plan Vision for Poole Park.



Lucie Allen, Chair, BH Active Travel



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**Subject:** RE: Consultation - Poole park road closure

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Public Health Dorset (PHD) supports the retention of the 24 hour closure of Whitecliff Gate to vehicular traffic. Access to greenspace is increasingly recognised as offering significant benefits for health and wellbeing. Greenspace quality (including perceived safety) is an important determinant of access and the extent of benefits people draw from spending time in those spaces i.e. higher quality greenspaces encourage people to spend more time in them and deliver greater benefit from that time than lower quality spaces. Poole Park is a key greenspace asset that supports the health and wellbeing of a significant number of local people. Retaining the closure offers the opportunity to enhance the quality of the site and the positive contribution it makes to the health and wellbeing of the local population. This could be delivered through the following:

- Elimination of vehicle movements increasing perceived safety of Poole Park and decreasing any actual risk posed to park users by vehicle movements. Higher perceived safety of greenspace is associated with increased use.
- Removal of vehicle noise from Poole Park increasing the benefit it provides for users as an area of relative quiet compared to the surrounding urban areas and increasing use of the park though an overall reduction in noise levels adding to its perceived quality.
- Removal of vehicles from Poole Park could improve air quality within the site reducing exposure to air pollution and its impact on health and wellbeing particularly for vulnerable users e.g. younger children, older people and people living with a respiratory health condition.

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**Subject:** Poole park

Hello Vikki.

I would just like to say that stopping through traffic in the park is a great idea and I hope that this is made permanent as it's much safer for birds and people.

Kind regards.

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**Subject: Poole Park Access consultation - Keyhole Bridge Group response**

Hello Martin

I attach Keyhole Bridge Group's response to the consultation. Please pass this to the consultation team (there are no contact details for them in the consultation information).

We would also like to draw attention to the leaflet (see attached photo) from a group called 'Leave Poole Park Alone'. The leaflets have been handed out in the park, distributed to local

households, left under windscreen wipers of cars in the park, and left in The Ark in Poole Park for people to pick up. The information states the trial closure is the first step in 'closing your park to all vehicles'. The implication in this statement is, as far as we're aware, untrue, yet could influence the way people respond to the consultation. Although it's not something I've formally recorded, I have spoken to a number of people who have completed the survey and objected to the closure on the basis of this statement. We hope to see this referenced and taken into account in the final report on the consultation.

## Poole Park Access

Proposed closure of entrance by Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue

Keyhole Bridge Group response to consultation, January/February 2024

Keyhole Bridge was temporarily closed to motor traffic from August 2020 to March 2021. The stated aim of the closure was to create a safer environment to travel to and through the area on foot or by bicycle with safer and more sustainable access to the Poole Park area. Further aims were to reduce the number of vehicles driving through the park itself and to improve accessibility to the well-used National Cycle Network Route 25. The proposed closure of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance achieves the same goals, albeit via a different scheme, and Keyhole Bridge Group fully supports the closure as a pragmatic and workable alternative to the Keyhole Bridge scheme.

The proposed closure aligns with national and local policy and planning as follows:

**Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling** states: "We want to see a future where half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked." It goes on to state that cycling and walking should be at the heart of transport, place-making and health policy.

**National Planning Policy Framework** highlights the Government's focus on encouraging sustainable travel to support health, wellbeing and environmental objectives.

**Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3): Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Strategy (2011 – 2026)** outlines how active travel will contribute to LTP3 goals including through the provision of a higher quality public realm creating pedestrian and cyclist friendly environments, and giving people the ability to explore Dorset's outstanding natural environment by walking and cycling.

**BCP Council Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** states "The BCP area will be a people-friendly place and enjoy a culture where walking or cycling is a safe and natural choice for residents and visitors, particularly for shorter journeys. A car will not be necessary to enjoy our world class environment." The route through Keyhole Bridge and the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance is marked as a primary cycling route in the LCWIP and is within a core walking zone.

BCP Council's **Safer routes to school programme** promotes safer, more environmentally sustainable and healthier ways of getting to and from school, with particular emphasis on walking and cycling. The route through the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance is used by students from a number of local schools, most notably Poole High.

The closure of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance to Poole Park is directly in support of the above policies.

There are a number of issues particularly relevant to Poole Park and Whitecliff Road which the closure helps to address:

Residents have raised concerns about the impact of excess traffic on the park environment as follows:

**BCP Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy** notes that the public response to the Council's 2021 Rethinking the Future of Parks & Green Spaces survey identified that green spaces, including Poole Park, could be improved by reducing the impact of traffic and vehicles.

**Poole Park Life Evaluation Report.** The Poole Park Life Project included the aims of making the park more accessible, with friendlier crossing points for pedestrians, and slowing vehicles down making it harder to drive through the park, however the evaluation report notes "...a consensus around the idea that this issue was not yet satisfactorily addressed and work in this area needed to continue. There is a strong feeling that this is unfinished business."

The closure of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance directly addresses these concerns by reducing the level of through traffic in the park.

There are also safety concerns relating to the railway arch in Whitecliff Road (Keyhole Bridge) as follows:

**Poole (Whitecliff Railway Arch) (Width Restriction) Order 1969.** The width restriction on Keyhole Bridge is routinely contravened by drivers entering and exiting the park via the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance with a consequent risk to pedestrians, wheelers, and cyclists, and to the structure of the bridge. (Evidence of contraventions was submitted for BCP Council's second consultation on Keyhole Bridge) The proposed closure of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance removes much of this traffic and reduces the number of contraventions of the width restriction. Prevention of strikes on bridges over highways. Under this protocol the Council has responsibility to ensure restrictions relating to railway bridges are signed in a manner that minimises risk to the structure of the bridge. The proposed closure of the Whitecliff Road/Twemlow Avenue entrance reduces the volume of traffic that might present a risk to the structure of the bridge and supports the Council in meeting this obligation.

Other information in support of the closure. In 2018 the DfT published the **Cycling and walking safety rapid evidence assessment** which states the following: "Maximising participation in walking and cycling necessitates that cyclists and pedestrians feel safe. Pedestrian and cyclist perceptions of safety will, in turn, be influenced by actual levels of safety." Reports from previous consultations on Keyhole Bridge show that when traffic on this route is reduced, perceptions of safety improve amongst pedestrians and cyclists.

**Traffic Impact of Highway Capacity Reductions; Assessment of the Evidence** and the follow up study **Disappearing traffic? The story so far** both indicate that the long term impact on surrounding road networks from the closure of this route is likely to reduce over time and be less than people expect. The reasons behind this are complex but include "...people changing their mode of travel, choosing to visit alternative destinations, changing the frequency of their journey, consolidating trips for different purposes, altering the allocation of tasks within a household to enable more efficient trip-making, car-sharing, or no longer making journeys (e.g. by working from home occasionally)."

Keyhole Bridge Group

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Subject: Poole Park - trial closure of Whitecliff Gate

Dear Mr Hadley,

I am writing regarding the above subject as someone who lives in your council ward and uses Poole Park on a regular, nearly daily, basis.

I would like to thank you for the trial closure of the gate to motor vehicles. I use Poole Park as both a cyclist and pedestrian (with children and my dog) and for the whole time I have lived here (nearly 15 years) I have been struck by how strange it was that the park had a through road running through it. To access the park I cross two busy roads (Longfleet and Parkstone) and for the last month it has been so noticeable how much calmer and peaceful the park is than before, where sometimes it felt like just a third busy road! Personally I would like to see even less motor traffic in the park, and I would restrict vehicle access to reaching the car parks but no further (maybe closing the T junction in the middle) but even as it is the environment is much improved.

My parents live in Wimborne and visit the park as blue badge holders so I think it's important people like them have access but see no reason why they or others should be able to use the park as a through road - it seems completely against the purpose of a park. Those campaigning for the reopening seem completely blind to the impact large motor vehicles have on the environment around them - in terms of noise, pollution and just the feel of the park for pedestrians.

So thank you again - I'm aware you will have had some very passionate correspondence from those with a different view to mine, but urge you to continue to do what you know is right to improve the lived experience of local residents.

Yours sincerely

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Subject: Churchfield road closure

We are a young family who have recently been fortunate enough to move to [REDACTED]. One of the best features in our eyes was the closure towards Fernside road which has provided us with a calm cycle friendly street which feels much safer for our kids and our dogs. I am so pleased to see (it was shared on the street WhatsApp group) that this closure is going to be made more physically permanent and am in full support of this.

My only query would be whether a bench is necessary? The birds hill /Churchfield bench seems to be frequented by lone smokers (not always tobacco) and feels very anti social / slightly threatening at times. Personally we would prefer not to have a bench added at the other end for this reason.

I would also like to voice our complete support for the closure of the whitecliff gate Poole park. I know this is a big issue for people but for us 'newcomers' it has created a wonderful large safe space to enjoy as a family and is completely logical in a park. Particularly for our kids on first bikes and the dogs. So again, I would like to fully support the closure as we absolutely love this park and use daily.

Many thanks for your time,  
Sincerely

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**Subject:** Poole Park Whitecliff Gate Closure - Poole Living Streets response to consultation

Living streets are the UK charity for everyday walking. Poole living streets wholeheartedly agree with the permanent closure of the Whitecliff gate because it encourages people to choose walking for everyday local journeys. It has reduced the volume of traffic in the park, which makes the park environment a safer, cleaner and more attractive place to walk. We believe this will in turn inspire people to walk more.

The route through Poole park is part of the BCP Council LCWIP, defining it as a cornerstone of local walking routes. There is no formal pedestrian crossing infrastructure within the park making it unsuitable for high volumes of traffic or use as a through route. Closing the gates therefore ensures it is a safer walking route. If there is a higher volume of two way traffic along the road from the middle gate roundabout and the exit onto Kingland road resulting from the closure, consideration of some extra infrastructure to allow people on foot to safely cross this section of the road might be worthwhile.

Closing the gates demonstrates the council's commitment to maintaining accessible green spaces for people within the conurbation, particularly those without access to their own gardens. There are a significant proportion of people in Poole Town ward who do not own cars and their use and enjoyment of the park should not be

negatively impacted by others who do own cars potentially using Poole park as a short cut. Some members have witnessed vehicles mounting the pavement to drive around the bollards, so a physical barrier to prevent this occurring could be beneficial to pedestrians.

The reduction in the volume of cars, by preventing through traffic, reduces noise and fumes from the vehicles, which is a huge benefit to pedestrians and also to wildlife. At the T junction by Middle gates, many cars have been observed to be ignoring the signs and turning into the closed road before having to U turn when they get down to the gate. Re-positioning the barrier from the right hand side to the left hand side of the road to block the natural entry to the no through road plus clearly marked no-through road and entry/exit for access to disabled parking might reduce this.

There appears to be some confusion that disabled/elderly/ those who are reliant on a car can no longer access the park. This is the result of misinformation spread by those not in favour of the closure. Should a permanent closure decision be made, ensuring the public are aware that access remains, would be important so that the benefits of the closure can be experienced by people who have been misled.

Closing the gates allows everyone from all walks of life and all ages to enjoy Poole park on foot. We therefore strongly endorse the closure.

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**Subject:** Closure of gate - Poole Park

Dear Sirs

I write in total and unreserved support of the permanent closure of this gate.

The park is a recreational place and is much more pleasant for walking in, not to mention safer, without the rat-run traffic most of which drives at an mph I wouldn't even hazard a guess. I often find myself waving down cars. Not only is it safer for pedestrians, but also for the disabled in their mobility chairs and children on their scooters, all of which was very noticeable on Saturday afternoon.

There is traffic enough with genuine park visitors. The speed limit used to be 15mph and a sign for this is still just visible in one place. With the heavy traffic of today it is 20mph! But little notice is taken of this, I regret to say.

As for the ludicrous objections of access and parking for people with disabilities, adding to pollution in the surrounding roads (surely another reason for keeping the park, where people sit around particularly in spring and summer, pollution free as far as is possible), and, when it's dark, people often feel safer walking in areas with traffic, they really are scraping the bottom of the barrel to bolster arguments.

I live with a good view into the park. After the rush hour there is little traffic in the park when it is dark, certainly insufficient to add to a feeling of safety.

There is still plenty of access with either the entrance at the Civic Centre or the entrance at Seldown Gate and as for the exit, anybody would think that all vehicles wanted to leave the park at the same time, and at rush hour - which some do because they've parked there all day for working in the town!

I feel very strongly about the permanent closure of the gate. A tremendous amount of money has been spent in the last few years enhancing the park in so many ways, so it seems ridiculous not to keep the area as pleasant and safe as possible for all to appreciate and enjoy.

At the moment it's a real joy to use this lovely space, as it was during the pandemic when there was little traffic owing to the closure of the keyhole bridge.

Yours faithfully

Sent from my iPad

## Emails against closure

18<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Councillor

I write this as a supporting letter regarding the temporary closure of the Whitecliff Gate into Poole Park. I have completed the survey on the BCP website, but felt there was more I wished to say and explain about my views on this issue.

I fully understand that this is a temporary closure, during a consultation period, and it is my sincere hope that, once that period is over, the park gate will once again be accessible to vehicles.

I fully understand that the concern may be that the park is being used by some as a cut through simply to avoid going round the civic centre area. Whilst I fully agree that there may be a *few* vehicles that use the roads in the park this way, I think the closure has far wider ramifications than just stopping this.

Firstly, I think that, for the majority of people who enter the park through the Whitecliff gate, the park is a pleasant place to visit, even if it is to drive through and back out again. The road is not a fast one to traverse as there are potholes, speedbumps, wildlife and pedestrians, but when you are driving through the park to either park up or simply enjoy the beauty from your vehicle, this doesn't matter. You want to go slowly. Although we live in Canford Heath, we try to return home, if we have been out, via Sandbanks, Whitecliff and the park as it is a beautiful drive and, with more limited mobility, a way we can enjoy our beautiful town. However, we do also stop and park and sit and enjoy the park. It is very disappointing, even for the trial period, to be unable to access the park through the Whitecliff gate and, whilst we could enter from the civic centre gate, one misses a great deal of the beautiful part of the park. I do not, therefore, believe the park is a 'rat run'. I also believe this will limit some of the people who would enjoy the park – and yes I appreciate they can enter other ways - and that would not be good for their mental health and well being which is an agenda of the council. Stopping easy through traffic is depriving many elderly and disabled people who cannot walk or cycle from enjoying the whole park, enabling them to only visit a part of it, cutting off everything from the Whitecliff Road gate to the roundabout. That seems discriminatory to me. Your survey questionnaire indicates, quite clearly, that car drivers can access the entire park. In reality to see, for instance, the quieter part of the park and/or the model boating area I would need to come in via Park Gate, drive to the roundabout, go along towards the closed Whitecliff gate, execute a u turn, which is presumably dangerous and then drive back along that stretch. That means extra driving, which is extra pollution, I guess and also a dangerous manoeuvre for all in executing a u turn in a narrow area. However, in order to fulfil what you quite clearly state on your own documentation in the survey/consultation document, that is exactly what I would need to do.

Secondly, I have real concerns, should this become a permanent arrangement, that the exit from the park for all park users will be problematic. Before the Whitecliff gate was closed there were two ways to exit the park. Leaving only the exit onto Kingland

Road will, I believe, cause congestion especially in the busy months of summer (and I do question why this trial isn't being made in the summer but in a deliberately quiet time of the year). The new disabled spaces leave a very narrow road where traffic cannot pass safely and so must drive along in turn. Plus, the road leads to a busy set of lights and roundabout where there are always inevitable delays. More people will be trying to enter this way as they cannot use Whitecliff, and everyone, every single user of the Park, will need to exit this way. When the park is busy there will be a lot of cars wanting to exit and the tail back will, I believe, go well beyond the car park entrance in busy times. My worry is that this will cause additional pollution and congestion and the council will then say it needs to restrict vehicle use even further. Call me a conspiracy theorist, but is this the ultimate agenda? I also worry that the cyclists, though in my years of using the park I have to say I see very, very few cyclists, will either be impeded by the traffic congestion leaving or will simply ride on the pavement. There is then also the issue of any emergency vehicles trying to exit or enter the park from this gate. Retaining two exit gates will surely and logically ease the traffic flow?

Thirdly, I do not believe that the closing of this gate will enhance safety for lone pedestrians and runners, especially women. I have seen numerous posts on line about people feeling the traffic offers them some measure of security and that parks like Meyrick Park and Kings Park feel unsafe for them as there are no vehicles to offer some measure of 'protection'. This is something I hadn't considered as I do not walk or run in the park alone, but I can see that this argument has some merit.

Fourthly, I know the council are very keen to encourage more cycling and that this may be part of the agenda in closing one gate. However, as I have said, I see very few cyclists in the park, perhaps because there is a much better traffic-free alternative route for them using Baiter alongside the water and taking them to the quay. Plus, the park is not great for cycling as there are a huge number of potholes (the fast cyclists on racing bikes tend not to like these) and wildlife and pedestrians to avoid.

I have read much disinformation on both sides of this debate and so many people seem to cite figures that have little or no foundation in fact and are not based on sound evidence.

I am disappointed that people keep saying we should stop moaning as the park is not closed, but the temporary closure of one gate with no consultation before hand and so shortly after the whole debacle over the closure of Keyhole Bridge, is altering the use of the park by many and, in my opinion, not for the good. I understand, and am willing to be corrected on this, that Poole Park was a gift to the people of Poole, all the people of Poole, and that the roads were put in for a purpose.

I do hope that the council will be objective as a result of the consultation, that the results of the consultation will be published in full and that the views of both sides of the debate will be fully considered. I also hope that, if the closure becomes more permanent, further studies will be carried out in the busier summer months and that all people in Poole will be consulted.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on the issue and I sincerely hope that once this temporary closure reaches its conclusion, our park is returned to normal; a situation which appeared not to be causing any significant issues.

Kind regards

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**Subject: Objection to closure of vehicular access to Poole Park**

Dear Sirs and madam,

I hope you are the correct persons to communicate with in this matter, if not, I'd appreciate it if you could redirect this and let me know who I should follow up. Thank you.

**Objection:**

I wholeheartedly object to BCP's 'project' of closing any of the Poole Park's vehicular access points.

And I speak as a resident born and bred in Poole and lived here constantly all my 67 years.

The park should remain open to all, to access it in any conventional way - just as it was intended, when given to the people of the borough.

BCP is alluding to solve a so-called 'congestion and safety problem' which just does not exist!

Congestion will only increase, with just ONE remaining, very narrow, and yet two-way, exit point!

It's blatantly obvious, BCP are scheming for this consequence and to use it as a stepping stone to close the park entirely to traffic.

All very suspicious that certain very local BCP councillors, who are known to be keen cyclists or anti cars, are pivotal in this 'project'. Not to mention the ridiculous and on-going key hole bridge closure scandal.

It doesn't take a genius to spot the apparent corruption here...

Oh, and I don't think anybody agrees with BCP making closures (again!), BEFORE (or even without), consulting the public council tax paying residents.

**In case I've not been clear: I do not support the closure of any Poole Park vehicular entrances, or the key hole bridge.**

Yours,

Lifelong resident, born and bred in Poole.

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**Subject:** Pool Park access

To Vikki, Andy & Martin - I would appreciate your separate and individual replies on this please.

For Councillor Challinor for action if necessary.

(For Councillor Aitkenhead for information / evidence gathering further to our discussion Saturday)

I am writing to you all to convey not only my disappointment in the underhanded way you have dealt with this undemocratic and morally wrong decision but to lodge my objection to not only the trail, consultation and possible closure and the many lies and misinformation you have told to your constituents and residents. I also believe you have acted in not only a devious and undemocratic manner but an illegal one too, one that will cost this already cash strapped council even more money.

Lies and misinformation:

*"Special Wildlife"*

First of all, I would like to rectify the view that there is NO "special wildlife" in the park, as a keen wildlife ambassador, I can assure you all that none of the wildlife in the park is special in anyway. In fact the bird species are quite common and bland mostly consisting of Swans, Mallards, Seagulls, Moorhens the odd Cormorant and occasional Oystercatcher as well as the usual urban mammals such as Badgers, Foxes and possibly Hedgehogs. These animals have lived quite happily with motor vehicles for over 100 years and I certainly don't recall any stories in the press and mass killings of these animals by cars. If they are so "special" and need protecting, I would imagine you will also;

- 1) stop dogs going into the park, who may chase them or cause them distress,
- 2) ban cyclists who are well known for not adhering to rules of the road and are a danger to wildlife and pedestrians alike and
- 3) stop the miniature train, which is as much as a danger to them as any car is. I presume this area was covered in the risk assessment when this business was restarted?

*"Rat run"*

I am unsure why this terminology is used regarding the park. It cannot be either a rat run or short cut due to the many speed bumps in the road and at some points it's width. Do you have any actual evidence of this - a legitimate survey or history of speeding tickets etc?

*"Reduction of pollution"*

All you are doing in closing this entrance is causing traffic to travel via alternative routes, thus moving vehicles into built up residential areas, all past the old Civic Centre, past nursing homes, children's nursery, flats etc. where many residents live

and pedestrians walk by. Are you foregoing your duty of care to these people so as to pander to the small minority of cyclists?

### *"Vandalism"*

In a recently deleted tweet on X, the leader made the spurious and scurrilous claim that residents and / or protesters had thrown the barriers into the lake. On what basis this was made I do not know, CCTV evidence perhaps? Witness testimony? Or was it perhaps the fact like most things the council does, the plastic barriers were ill conceived and not fit for purpose and were moved by the high winds? I would be hopeful of an apology for this slur on people like myself to be posted onto Social Media or made in the Chambers.

### Decision making:

I can find no mention of this decision in any recent Cabinet meetings, in fact it seems this decision was made undemocratically and not voted upon by Council, similarly to the closing of Kings Park Nursery. Is the Leader now taking it upon herself to make such momentous decisions on her own now? It seems very similar to the previous administration and not at all what we were promised at the beginning of "transparency and consultation".

### Finances:

Considering the council is in debt, what is the cost of this exercise? The signage and barriers? The cost of I.T in producing the consultation document? The hours spent collating and organising the information when finished? I think the Council has far more important things to consider spending their money on instead of bowing down to the whims of zealots such as the local group BH Active, other national cycling organisations as well as Councillors own ideology and anti car agenda.

How will you fund any further court cases if you ignore popular opinion and close the gates permanently?

\* Please see further down regarding a possible extra cost factor in relation to the consultation.

### Legality:

I am on the understanding that the Council has a duty to inform the public of road closures, not necessarily on their website but certainly in the local press. Where is the notification for the closure? What day / date was this printed in the Bournemouth Echo?

Breaching of the covenant of the park. I believe the closure of the park will breach the covenant on the basis that the park was given to the people of Poole, for ALL to enjoy and all three entrances free to access to people and traffic alike.

The closure was supposed to be for the gate only, but recently it also now includes road access to much needed disabled bays, this is clearly a case of discrimination for those less fortunate than us or who cannot use a bike. I don't suppose any charities were consulted on this or any relevant documentation undertaken?

### Consultation document:

Unfortunately it seemed my question for the recent Q&A was either too difficult to answer or simply ignored as wasn't mentioned and still not answered by anyone, however if you had bothered to read it you would have seen part of my question was "Can you also guarantee that this so-called consultation will not be tampered with by anti-car and fascist groups such as the local BH Active and other national cycling organisations?" Well, the answer is a resounding NO, because anyone can answer it as many times as they like. There is absolutely no way to stop it being tampered with and being totally honest by either the FOR or AGAINST groups - and before you say, but we will check against peoples postcodes, it doesn't take much to Google a list of BH postcodes and use any if not all of them! So it seems that the whole document is a complete waste of time and money\*, not only is it very divisive and clearly leans to reasons why the gate should be closed rather than why it should stay open but easily open to manipulation (very unlikely to hold any weight in a court of law).

And finally can I remind you, that you are here for the resident's and not for your own agenda's no matter how important they seem to you, the resident's opinions should come first.

Yours angrily

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Dear Vikki

I am writing to express my deep concern and dissatisfaction regarding the recent decision to close the Keyhole Bridge entrance to Poole Park. As a resident of Parkstone, I have been a frequent user of this entrance, and the closure has significantly impacted my experience and convenience in accessing the park.

I would like to highlight several key points that underscore the negative consequences of this closure:

1. **Increased Travel Time and Traffic Congestion:** As a resident from the East, the Keyhole Bridge entrance has been my primary access point to Poole Park. The closure forces me to use the park gates entrance, resulting in an additional 15-20 minutes of travel time during busy periods. This not only adds to the congestion on the roads but also contributes to increased pollution, adversely affecting both the air quality within Poole Park and the surrounding areas.
2. **Non-sensical Single Exit:** The decision to have only one exit at the park gates entrance is impractical, given the one-lane system and large parking spaces, causing massive queues during peak times. This congestion poses risks to cyclists and pedestrians and further exacerbates pollution within the park.

3. **Safety Concerns for Cyclists and Pedestrians:** The need for a 3-point turn at the 'end' of the park creates a more hazardous environment for cyclists and pedestrians. The closure of the Keyhole Bridge entrance and the resultant changes in traffic patterns pose unnecessary risks in this area.
4. **Negative Impact on Local Businesses and Park Utilization:** The extended travel time and increased inconvenience will discourage residents like myself from using the park, impacting local businesses and diminishing the overall appeal of Poole Park as a recreational space. Instead of fostering a sense of community and enjoyment, these changes make accessing the park less appealing.
5. **Historical Success of Dual Entrances:** Poole Park has functioned effectively with two entrances in the past, and there have been no significant issues reported. The closure seems to be a deviation from a system that was well-received by the community.
6. **Preservation of Poole Park's Purpose:** Poole Park was bestowed upon the people of Poole, and any alteration should be approached with great consideration. Maintaining the dual entrance system aligns with the park's original purpose and ensures accessibility for all residents.
7. **Alternative Solutions:** Instead of a complete closure, consider implementing restricted access during specific commuter hours, such as 8-9 AM and 5-6 PM. This approach would address concerns about the park being used as a commuter rat run without depriving residents of access during other times.

In conclusion, I urge the council to reconsider the decision to close the Keyhole Bridge entrance to Poole Park. Collaborative solutions that prioritize the needs of the community, address traffic concerns, and preserve the park's intended purpose should be explored to ensure the continued enjoyment of this valuable public space.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to a positive resolution that benefits the residents of Poole.

kindest regards

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Details:

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I write to complain formally about the closure of the Twemlow Avenue entrance to Poole Park.

I cycle daily through the park on my way to work and access the park regularly in my vehicle via this entrance. I have neither a cyclist nor a motorist agenda.

The decision to close this entrance without consultation restricts vehicular traffic into and through the park causing significant inconvenience to many drivers and forces them to join the congestion on surrounding areas.

I look forward to receiving a formal reply from BCP registering my complaint and ensuring it will be considered when the 'trial' of this closure is evaluated,

Yours sincerely,

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Dear Mr Whitchurch, I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Penn Hill Ward regarding the recent decision to temporarily close the exit gate at Poole Park. I have carefully reviewed the arguments presented by the BCP Council in favour of this closure, and I would like to express my very strong objection to the decision based on several grounds.

- **Safety Concerns:** The claim that the closure aims to improve safety lacks substantial evidence. I appreciate the statement from retired Dorset Police officer [REDACTED], confirming the absence of recorded incidents related to collisions, pedestrian accidents, or safety concerns. Without concrete data supporting the Council's position, it seems unjustifiable to implement such measures.
- **Emissions and Congestion:** The argument that the closure will reduce pollution and congestion appears contradictory. The additional 1.6-mile detour for visitors from the East will likely result in increased emissions. Moreover, concentrating the same number of cars at ONE exit may exacerbate congestion issues rather than alleviate them.
- **Wildlife Protection:** The assertion that the closure is necessary to protect special wildlife lacks specificity and supporting evidence. Without detailed information on the threatened species and relevant studies, this claim seems disingenuous.
- **Rat Run/Cut Through and Speeding Cars:** The presence of speed humps and pinch gates already controls speed. The absence of accident reports and social media evidence indicates that the current traffic management measures are effective. Using the closure to address concerns about speeding or cut-through traffic seems unnecessary and counterproductive.
- **Impact on Disabled Access:** The closure significantly impacts disabled access, forcing disabled drivers and their caregivers to make a 1.6-mile diversion. This contradicts the Council's claim that the closure will not affect disabled access and places an unnecessary burden on those who rely on the park's amenities.
- **Lack of Consultation and Data:** The decision to close the gate without prior consultation is troubling and potentially in breach of accepted practices and the Equality Act. Furthermore, the absence of relevant data to support the Council's claims raises concerns about the thoroughness of the decision-making process.

- **Conflicts of Interest:** The involvement of councillors with personal interests in anti-car campaigns and cycling initiatives, coupled with potential conflicts of interest, raises questions about the impartiality of the decision-making process.
- **Historical Commitments to Free and Open Access:** The closure risks breaching the historical commitment to free and open access to Poole Park, as agreed upon when the land was bequeathed to the people in 1886. In light of the aforementioned concerns, I strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to close the exit gate at Poole Park. It is my sincere hope that the council will engage in transparent and inclusive consultations, considering the diverse needs and concerns of the community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that you will advocate for a fair and evidence-based resolution that aligns with the best interests of the community.

I look forward to your response

Kind regards

16th January 2024

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It's with great disappointment that I have needed to respond to the consultation about the closure of Poole Park gates. I wonder who instigated this proposal & trial and their motives. Not the published ones. I suspect in some cases more personal!

My husband and I (76 & 78) walk in the park 3 to 5 days a week, weather permitting. As he is unable to walk as far as he did & hills are a concern the flat surfaces in the Park make these walks ideal. We enjoy the beauty of the park & the easy access to Whitecliff & Baiter. We have NEVER experienced any problems with cars. We find them courteous, pausing to allow us to cross. We find them especially considerate in the "key hole" bridge.

However our **BIGGEST CONCERNS & ANXIETY** are **THE CYCLIST**. We have had our shoulders/ arms knocked as they pass us. On the previous trial of the Key Hole Bridge there were several occasions when their ridiculous, racing, speed through the bridge caused us to have to "jump" out of their way. We have always found that the cars give pedestrians right of way, especially prams and wheel chairs, allowing everyone time to safely reach the pavements.

To my mind a "rat run" is so where cars race through to reach a destination quicker. Driving through Poole Park certainly wouldn't achieve this.

Our other concern is the total chaos the park gates closure will cause. It's already difficult with traffic the Swimming Bath end, of the park. especially since the disabled spaces have extended onto the road reducing the passing width of cars. Larger vehicles and apprehensive drivers can very quickly create a long queue tailback. Without the gates by the boating lake end offering access this problem will greatly increase.

I'd be very interested to discover if these closures will increase or decrease the park usage. Parking is always difficult in the park. Coming from Broadstone we usually enter by the swimming pool. If we can't park we can travel through the park hoping for a parking space near the model boats or Whitecliff. Even when we park in Poole Park the majority of occasions we leave by the model boating lake & complete our outing by parking somewhere near Shore Road.

I do hope you and all the councillors will consider this, to us, unnecessary & disappointing idea.

Thank you

Customer message - What give you the right to close parts of Poole park, this was given to people of pole, not BCP. If anything you should be making the railways fit a small pedestrian tunnel next to keyhole bridge or you should be making it, we don't have horse and carts that small now days to fit people walking and cars through. Also how many crashes, car related deaths, people being run over or speeding has happened in that park. Who made this happen, the cycling brigade led by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]??

Regards

Reference - CU-123931

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We have been advised to e-mail our local councillors regarding this matter as it affects residents in all areas. Whilst Sue is not my ward councillor I have CC'd her in as I spoke to her at a recent protest we held and would like her to consider the following points.

As you may be aware there is currently a trial closure of the Whitecliff Gate at the entrance to Poole Park. The aim is to stop through traffic to deter what are said to be rat runners. As part of a local group that has come together to oppose this closure I would like to ask that you consider, and where appropriate, question BCP council on certain points:-

1/ The consultation is questionable in its reliability. I would ask that the question is raised as to how the council will validate the data. It has been suggested that people can complete the online consultation numerous times. It is even possible for someone nationwide to complete the consultation using a BCP postcode. No e-mail address is required to complete the consultation. I have asked a number of times 'what is the plan to validate the data? and how will it be validated?' with no response.

2/ There is a question as to the legality of the closure. It is currently being explored by the group because of the following concerns:-

Common Law and right of access, provides for continuation of access to walkers AND vehicles, if vehicle passage has been proven over 20 years usage.

Once a highway has come into being by whatever means it continues indefinitely. No matter whether it is used or not Harvey v Truro RDC (1903) 2Ch 638.

The original covenant dating back to the time when the park was gifted to the people of poole states that access should not be denied. We are currently sourcing the original documents to validate this.

We are currently exploring the legality of this closure to through traffic with a legal expert.

3/ There is a supposition that all drivers wishing to drive through the park are being classed as 'rat runners'. To quote one of many residents:-

'I rarely drive through the park on my way to and from work. I work at [REDACTED] and live in Hamworthy. However, there are times when I have had a particularly distressing day or situation that I choose to drive through the park on my way home. As I need to get home to my children I rarely have time to stop, but find this very therapeutic. I never exceed the speed limit and am always courteous to pedestrians and cyclists. This is for my own mental health and wellbeing. If I am stopped from this I feel it is unfair. Why is my mental health not important but closing an entrance where there has never been an incident is?'

This is just one example of the many comments we have received. In short, Many people rarely use the park as a through route or for a short cut but do not want the right to do so to be taken away and see no reason for it being.

4/ We feel that the few who use the park route for a short cut and do not comply with the rules should be addressed with further traffic calming, consideration given to more pedestrian priority crossings and a 10 MPH speed limit. These measures in themselves would slow traffic even further and discourage it being used as a short cut as it would have no time benefit.

5/ The consultation is being undertaken during the winter months. We feel that the true effects will be felt in the summer months. Therefore, it is unlikely to give a true reflection of the ongoing issues.

6/ The park will now have only one exit route. This will cause congestion in the park itself during events, usually held in the summer months.

Please consider the above points and if possible raise concerns with BCP on our behalf.

Kind regards

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Dear Councillors Slade and Sidaway,

I am writing to formally express my objection to the gate closure at Poole Park and more worryingly, the obvious intention to stop cars travelling through altogether in the future.

I also filled out the Survey, which I suspect is a complete waste of time. You can tell by the way it's worded that the council are trying to skew the results to fit their agenda and what my sexual orientation has to do with anything, is anyone's guess!

I have been using Poole Park for 44 years. Initially as a child, taken by my grandparents. Then as a parent myself, entertaining my own children. My children are grown up now, so I don't visit as often, but I look forward to visiting Poole Park with grandchildren in the future and I sincerely hope that the park is as accessible as it has always been. I occasionally use it as a scenic cut through (at very slow speeds) to enjoy the scenery and reminisce about times past.

In all those 44 years of using the park by car, I have never seen any incidents or accidents involving human, car or animal, so I am utterly perplexed as to why BCP are pursuing this action!

BCP say it is being used a 'rat run' but I believe this is an exaggeration because unless you are going towards Poole from Lilliput you wouldn't bother as it is such a slow route with multiple

obstructions and speed bumps. Whenever I have driven through, there hasn't been lots of cars and they were respectful of slow speeds and wait patiently to pass each other.

BCP talk about emissions being a reason, but if they force cars from one route they will block another route and cars will be stuck in a jam, therefore on the roads for longer and creating more emissions, not less!

BCP also say they've had complaints from neighbouring houses but the Park and access points were there long before the current neighbours and they would've known exactly what they were in for before buying. It's a bit like when people who buy a house overlooking a cricket ground that's been there for 100 years and then complain when a ball lands in their garden!

If BCP insist on closing the Whitecliff gate permanently, it will cause problems for traffic in the park. Cars that are parked on the road that lead to the Whitecliff gate will be doing 3 point turns to turn around to get out. There will be a bottleneck at the Seldown Gate entrance because of the parked cars on one side which makes the road only wide enough for one car. The cynical amongst us might think that's why BCP want to close the Whitecliff entrance, so when it does cause traffic problems they have an excuse to close it to cars completely - even though they have created the problem!

It is very concerning that a small number of people belonging to cycling groups are lobbying to close Poole Park to cars and being very provocative in their tone, especially on social media. I just don't understand where they're coming from as I'm sure they all drive cars too! BCP have invested millions on building cycle paths and cycle lanes throughout the county and I hardly EVER see a cyclist on them!

I own a bike and I enjoy cycling, so I'm not against cyclists but we need for common sense to prevail and realise that it's just not practical or reasonable to expect everyone to bin their car and get on a bike! I don't understand how this minority have such sway with BCP - it feels quite sinister and conspiratorial.

The only way to encourage people to not use their cars is to improve public transport and i don't see any evidence of that happening.

My elderly grandparents had medical issues that would prevent them from walking far and they certainly wouldn't have been able to cycle! They used to drive to Poole Park, sit in their car and watch the world go by and feed the ducks. If BCP go ahead with their plans to ban cars from Poole Park, they will be denying people like my grandparents. The elderly, the disabled and parents with young children will suffer the most and it is discrimination.

Poole Park was given to the people of Poole and as far as I can see the people of Poole don't want this change.

To coin a popular phrase - If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Yours sincerely,

(Broadstone Resident)

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**Subject: Whitecliff Gate Closure in Poole Park**

Dear Councillor Slade,

I am writing to express my concern and outrage at the closure of the Whitecliff entrance/exit at Poole Park.

In the Poole Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2017 – 2030 it states “*the peoples park is the most popular public open space in Poole and we want to make it even better for generations to come*” There is reference to the traffic and wanting to improve for all park goers and they refer to a high-profile trial road closure in July assessing the impact both inside and outside of Poole park – where is the documented evidence of the outcome of this?

I have several questions regarding the process that BCP are following and as you and Peter are my local councillors, I would appreciate a response -

1. Can you please clarify your reason for wanting to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?
2. What exactly is BCP's criteria/outcomes for the trial closure?
3. Where and when was it documented that this was going to happen?
4. What is the budgeted cost for the consultation/survey?
5. It has been highlighted that BCP has a severe shortage of funds so I would like to ask why money is being spent on this exercise to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?
6. You state on the survey that you want it to be permanent “*Trial 17/1 – 13/2 a daily 24-hour gate closure*” so is this just a paper exercise with NO consultation? If this is the case, why are you even bothering with a survey?
7. Why was this “trial” closure implemented in January and not the height of Summer?
8. Has/will data be collected for similar periods before or after the trial period, for a fair and honest comparison?
9. I do not believe that there is any data being collected as to the effect on surrounding roads on the impact of the closure, both in increased times in traffic, increases in pollutants due to longer journeys through more congested roads and the increased danger of all vehicles exiting through a dangerously configured exit that meets an already congested road system. Or even movement into and out of the park. Could you please let me have copies of this information if it exists?
10. Why is the trial closure not just at rush hour, similar to the entrance near to the Civic centre or alternatives sought?
11. How are you measuring the feedback as it is clear that the process is open to manipulation as only a BH post code is required? This means it is open to anyone countrywide with no knowledge of Poole Park who can support the closure just by using a BH postcode. Will you cross reference with number of people living at that address on the electoral role? If not, why not?

**I am extremely concerned about the bias against the motor vehicle especially as there are a number of “pro” cycling councillors who appear to be taking every opportunity to add LTNs, cycle paths and now restricting access to parks to make it more difficult for the car drivers.**

**I do not have any confidence that you will be making a fair, impartial and non-biased analysis of the final results.**

12. What processes will be used to analyse and present the survey results?
13. What assurances can the council provide regarding impartiality in this respect?  
Also, the failure to collect any empirical data makes this purely a public opinion exercise. This raises serious doubts about the operation of the council/councillors and in fact could be deemed as discriminatory against disabled individuals.

In addition, I do not consent to this closure as from a personal perspective I am really concerned about the impact this is having on the stress and wellbeing of people including myself. I used to drive to Poole Park to meet friends and have a walk with my dog and then go down for a walk on the beach. This closure now means that I have to exit via the Seldown gate entrance, which is far more dangerous and, I believe, an accident waiting to happen.

In addition, it has increased my journey times and adding to the queues, congestion and pollution that BCP were stating would be stopped by this through traffic. I now have to go back on myself which is only adding to the pollution that BPC claim. This closure has increased my travel from 2.3 miles to 3.5 miles – an increase of over 50% to journey length, let alone increase in time due to increased congestion as a result which will also lead to increased pollution.

I look forward to receiving your response.

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**Subject: Re Closure of Whitecliff Gate Poole Park**

Dear Councillor Slade,

I am writing to express my concern and outrage at the closure of the Whitecliff entrance/exit at Poole Park.

In the Poole Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2017 – 2030 it states "*the peoples park is the most popular public open space in Poole and we want to make it even better for generations to come*" There is reference to the traffic and wanting to improve for all park goers and they refer to a high-profile trial road closure in July assessing the impact both inside and outside of Poole park – where is the documented evidence of the outcome of this?

I have several questions regarding the process that BCP are following and as you and Peter are my local councillors, would appreciate a response accordingly.

1. Can you please clarify your reason for wanting to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?
2. What exactly is BCP's criteria/outcomes for the trial closure?
3. Where and when was it documented that this was going to happen?
4. What is the budgeted cost for the consultation/survey?
5. It has been highlighted that BCP has a severe shortage of funds so I would like to ask why money is being spent on this exercise to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?

6. You state on the survey that you want it to be permanent "*Trial 17/1 – 13/2 a daily 24-hour gate closure*" so is this just a paper exercise with NO consultation? If this is the case, why are you even bothering with a survey?
7. Why was this "trial" closure implemented in January and not the height of Summer?
8. Has/will data be collected for similar periods before or after the trial period, for a fair and honest comparison?
9. I do not believe that there is any data being collected as to the effect on surrounding roads on the impact of the closure, both in increased times in traffic, increases in pollutants due to longer journeys through more congested roads and the increased danger of all vehicles exiting through a dangerously configured exit that meets an already congested road system. Or even movement into and out of the park. Could you please let me have copies of this information if it exists?
10. Why is the trial closure not just at rush hour, similar to the entrance near to the Civic centre or alternatives sought?
11. How are you measuring the feedback as it is clear that the process is open to manipulation as only a BH post code is required? This means it is open to anyone countrywide with no knowledge of Poole Park who can support the closure just by using a BH postcode. Will you cross reference with number of people living at that address on the electoral role? If not, why not?

**I am extremely concerned about the bias against the motor vehicle especially as there are a number of "pro" cycling councillors who appear to be taking every opportunity to add LTNs, cycle paths and now restricting access to parks to make it more difficult for the car drivers.**

**I do not have any confidence that you will be making a fair, impartial and non-biased analysis of the final results.**

12. What processes will be used to analyse and present the survey results?
13. What assurances can the council provide regarding impartiality in this respect? Also, the failure to collect any empirical data makes this purely a public opinion exercise. This raises serious doubts about the operation of the council/councillors and in fact could be deemed as discriminatory against disabled individuals.

I totally disagree with BCP closing the Whitecliff entry/exit point. This is forcing me to exit via the Seldown gate which is a far more dangerous exit and is causing huge congestion on exiting the park.

It has also caused huge distress to my father who visits the park regularly and uses the Whitecliff exit as he feels safer to do so. He has now stopped visiting the park and it is likely to affect his wellbeing.

I await your response.

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**Subject:** Re Closure of Whitecliff Gate Poole Park

Dear Councillor Slade,

I am writing to express my concern and outrage at the closure of the Whitecliff entrance/exit at Poole Park.

In the Poole Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2017 – 2030 it states “*the peoples park is the most popular public open space in Poole and we want to make it even better for generations to come*” There is reference to the traffic and wanting to improve for all park goers and they refer to a high-profile trial road closure in July assessing the impact both inside and outside of Poole park – where is the documented evidence of the outcome of this?

I have several questions regarding the process that BCP are following and would appreciate a response as you and Peter are my local councillors.

1. Can you please clarify your reason for wanting to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?
2. What exactly is BCP's criteria/outcomes for the trial closure?
3. Where and when was it documented that this was going to happen?
4. What is the budgeted cost for the consultation/survey?
5. It has been highlighted that BCP has a severe shortage of funds so I would like to ask why money is being spent on this exercise to close the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park?
6. You state on the survey that you want it to be permanent “*Trial 17/1 – 13/2 a daily 24-hour gate closure*” so is this just a paper exercise with NO consultation? If this is the case, why are you even bothering with a survey?
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**I am extremely concerned about the bias against the motor vehicle especially as there are a number of “pro” cycling councillors who appear to be taking every opportunity to add LTNs, cycle paths and now restricting access to parks to make it more difficult for the car drivers.**

**I do not have any confidence that you will be making a fair, impartial and non-biased analysis of the final results.**

12. What processes will be used to analyse and present the survey results?

13. What assurances can the council provide regarding impartiality in this respect?

Also, the failure to collect any empirical data makes this purely a public opinion exercise. This raises serious doubts about the operation of the council/councillors and in fact could be deemed as discriminatory against disabled individuals.

I absolutely object to the closure as this has not stopped motorbikes, bikes (both types including electric bikes), e-scooters or pedestrians accessing this entrance despite the signs stating that "Poole Park is closed to **all** through traffic" – traffic can include the aforementioned – dictionary definition "*the movement of vehicles or people along roads*" Vehicle definition is "*anything that transports a person or thing*" so does include bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters.

Also please note that the signs are confusing as Poole Park is not closed, however I believe that this is the long-term plan which has been documented in local media.

The majority of the disabled parking is down the road towards the Whitecliff exit and as such is now a hazard as people are forced to do a 3-point turn (minimum) to exit the park. This is causing me stress and as such BCP are totally discriminating against me as a registered disabled person.

I await your response.

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**Subject:** Consultation on the closure of Whitecliff Gate to Poole Park (The Peoples Park)

Dear All,

As someone born in Poole and fully involved as B of P requested fundraising volunteer support organiser for the HLF Lottery Bid for Poole Park, I am very familiar with all aspects of the park, was also involved in collecting park user feedback required for the Lottery and saw first hand how such data can be used to affect decisions made and can be presented to suit the wished for scenario rather than the wishes of those who it affects most.

The previous Poole Park Closure trial took place in July and caused havoc each evening, including gridlock from the George Roundabout to Sandbanks and through Ashley X on more than one memorable occasion. Attending a Full Council meeting as Vice Chair of a local residents association, I was able to walk there but my asthma was certainly affected by the exhaust fumes hanging in the air on a balmy summer's evening. I might add that residents and tourists queuing were all furious. Many councillors spent their evening in the traffic jams instead and therefore eventually came to the sensible conclusion that closing a road in isolation just does not work but, however desirable, needs to be part of a road system review to avoid the tailbacks, delays (including buses, ambulances, police etc) and additional displaced higher pollution levels to neighbouring roads - in this case, the balconied

flats along Parkstone Road, the well used tennis courts in early evening in summer ,the bowls club, hospital staff and patients at bus stops etc. etc.

The same thing surely applies here, especially as this trial is at the quietest time of the year instead.

The argument that no school traffic equates to tourist volume is not correct. The school children do not stay at home all summer, they are out and about being ferried to/from the beach, clubs, games etc by car plus the tourists moving across the whole of BCP at the same times.

This is called a "Trial" by BCP on some occasions but also use the phrase " We aim to make this a permanent closure " on others and so lessens the faith of so many ratepayers even more that the consultation is an effort at democracy rather than the window dressing required for a decision already made.

As on many previous occasions, It is said " This is a consultation not a referendum" but that is exactly how the results will be presented to Council and the decision will be swayed by that as they always are. Who wouldn't be ?

Using a method (Snapchat) that allows multiple entries from the same person and from groups who have an single agenda, plus entries from subscribers to other causes and national magazines who have no idea where Poole is and will never visit, will not give a fair and democratic response for BCP Council to consider and stands little chance of the majority of ratepayers agreeing with your statement that BCP is " ... a modern, accessible and accountable council".

anyone can look up a BCP postcode and use it - they have and they will.

A suggestion made was that a numbered paper consultation paper could have gone out with the BCP rate bills due soon, ensuring that those who pay the rates and vote for their councillors are the ones you listen to. Answers could have then been returned by post/ dropped into collection points or completed online using the allocated number just once.

Have you any idea how many park users have no idea that this consultation is active ? Those of us troubling to inform as many as possible have found that to be very much the case, Do officers assume that all BCP rate payers have Facebook or indeed ever look at the BCP page even if they do ? Would you go into a library and ask if there happen to be a consultation on anything ? If BCP council are going to do a good enough job in consulting the ratepayers then this method is just not good enough is it ? Not fit for purpose consultation method and wrong time of year to judge a trial closure in that area.

I will leave the other very relevant objections to this scheme to the many others who have or will contact you but would just like to add that if there is included a safeguarding of wildlife as a reason for closure, with absolutely no data to back that up as there is none, it might have been wiser for the Portfolio Holder not to say to the Daily Mail that this would enable users to let their dogs roam Poole Park off lead. Those Poole born like myself learnt at an early age that wildlife and dogs should be kept far apart when in Poole Park and that is what people do to protect both.

Please listen to what your residents are telling you and decide accordingly.

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Subject: Temporary closure of Poole Park

Dear Conor Burns

I am writing with regards to the temporary closure of the Whitecliff Road entrance/exit to Poole Park.

I am opposed to the decision to close this entrance/exit to Poole Park. BCP say it is to stop the 'rat run'. Although I understand that the park was not closed because of a 'rat run' but because people would use it to park for work. It is certainly not a rat run in the mornings due to the gates not being open until 10am. As regular users of the park at all times of the day, and evening in lighter evenings, we do not see problem. Any traffic is slowed to the speed limit anyway, to be honest we do not see people break this limit. We are passionate about keeping this park open to traffic. Problems with traffic are piling up elsewhere because of this issue. If people are walking through the park at night it is safer to have the presence of cars.

We are not aware of any accidents in Poole Park. There are also no surveys being conducted to analyse the volume of traffic going through the park. Is this because it is not a problem anyway? This park was created in 1909 as a people's park, the photographs at the only existing exit shows carriages, motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians all happily using the park as intended. Safely, we can all enjoy the park together. The campaign to shut the Whitecliff Road entrance seems to be something the cycling lobby of BHAT seem to want. However, we barely see a cyclist in the park and wonder why they would want this gate shut. The one exit left to us at present, Kingland Road, is just causing problems elsewhere and I can see no point to this at all. Surely cyclists and cars can live together and share the space.

It's a beautiful park and was always intended for the residents to enjoy, and we certainly do, the park is registered with historic England and is something to be proud of, not to make it inconvenient for all.

The fear is that the next move is to close the park to traffic completely, except for disabled drivers. As pensioners (we are 72 and 79) we drive to the park, park the car, we are not able to ride a bike, we do this on a regular basis at all times of day, to walk our dog, take exercise and have a coffee at the Kitchen Café or the Ark. We do not have a blue badge and are reasonably fit to walk in the flat park. The park is always well used with people walking, jogging, taking young children to the play park walking dogs or just meeting with friends. We have got to know people who use it regularly. It is a people's park and must be kept accordingly for people to enjoy, not just those with a blue badge. To ban cars would be detrimental for what the park is, a park for the residents to use. As it happens, closing one exit gate moves all the traffic to

Poole centre, which will cause a lot of chaos by the Lighthouse roundabout and fulfil the BCP purpose of likely closure to all traffic, we are hearing about and seeing problems with Sandbanks due to this closure.

Our suggested solution would be to close the park to through traffic at rush hour in the evening between 5 and 6.30pm as well as the mornings. We attended a protest on Saturday 3rd February which was well attended and we are all in agreement that Whitecliff Road entrance/exit should stay open. We hope we can rely on your support.

Yours sincerely

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**Subject:** Whitecliff gate.

Dear Councillor Slade.

I have to ask, why you, your fellow councillors and friends, feel the need to close the entrance at Whitcliff gate. If your problem really is with traffic you are only moving it onto an already busy road.

Every time I drive through the park I have never encountered a problem with the traffic. Always finding drivers, pedestrians, cyclist's and E scooters courteous.

We do not use the park as a "rat run". I pick my Grandson up from school once a week, drop him off at home, drive down Orchard Avenue, left onto Twemlow Avenue, enjoy the beautiful scene in front of me and through Whitecliff gate. This is a very relaxing drive, I have seen very few cars and even less bikes. The alternative route is very stressful.

I am seventy three years old and cycled every day to work until my retirement. So I see the argument from both camps. However I feel you are forgetting the elderly and disabled people who would love to be fit and well enough to ride a bike.

Let us all use the transport that gets us out of our homes and enjoy the beauty of our park, without the added stress of three point turns. I can not see any benefit whatsoever to close the gate. I take my eighty three year old neighbour to the park, she is newly widowed and having chemo. She loves the ride through the park and onto Sandbanks. Are you really happy to take that pleasure away from her and so many others. The mini buses from care homes and special needs schools will have a terrible time turning. Please look at all the vulnerable people who love the park, and reconsider thinking of a permanent closure.

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Subject: Numerous Comments

Many Likes & followers to these comments (not created by me) Not copied to anyone else!

I think Vikki Slade has got herself in a bit of a bind. Like all politicians she has committed to something she thought would be popular but now finds her support for the park closure will cost her her re-election and almost certainly scupper her chances to be an MP.

Her view will have been heavily swayed by the "Rethinking the future of parks and green spaces" report of July 2021. She would do well to note that there were only 803 respondents and that those would probably be people with an agenda who hoped to persuade the BCP to their point of view. Everyday citizens without any axe to grind wouldn't have bothered responding.

Her dilemma of course is what it has always been for politicians, that they can't be seen to vacillate or execute a U turn. Her only possible chance of survival now is to announce that having conducted the experiment she now finds that the overwhelming results from the general public, rather than the self-selected July report respondents, show that this proposal is not viable. Firstly on the major safety issue of only having a single escape route in the case of an extreme emergency. Secondly on the extra pollution caused by legitimate park users having to take substantial diversions to get to the park and thirdly on no substantiated evidence that there is any danger to other park users as the park is closed in the mornings at the time when maybe a rat run could have happened. By no unsubstantiated evidence I again refer to the July 2021 report where there are only anonymous hearsay and vested interest comments. Fourthly, she could support the long held privileges held by the citizens of Poole who were granted those privileges by Lord Wimborne when the park was bequeathed to the people.

If Vikki Slade chooses not to heed the majority views I think she will find the majority view will find its way to the ballot box and bring down all her other ambitions.

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Subject: Poole park closure

I am very concerned that the closure of the gates will lead to problems of which we probably will only realise after the closure is made permanent. I realise you and the council have lots of things to do during your time in office but I think there is more important things to be done.

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**Subject:** Leave Poole Park Alone

Dear Historic England

"The present is a key to the past" Sir Charles Lyell

Referring to notable Poole Historical Authors, Geoffrey Budden "The Peoples Park" & "Memories Of Old Poole" Andrew Hawkes

They both refer to the Lord & Lady Wimborne Covenant to The Borough Of Poole as giving **"FREE ACCESS TO ALL"**

In fact your own references say "It says the "drive" is a principle element of the 1887 scheme...

The Park Drive, a carriage drive 24' (c 6m) wide, bordered on each side by a footpath, extends east from the Seldown Gate entrance parallel to the northern boundary of the park and to the north of the salt-water lake. The drive connects Seldown Gate entrance to the west, Norton's Gate and Bird's Hill Gate to the north, and East Gate entrance to the north-

east and the various facilities within the park. It was a principal feature of Elford's scheme for the park and is shown on his plan (1887). The drive is partly planted with mature horse chestnuts and is bordered by lawns, with ornamental planting generally concentrated to its north

Unfortunately, in 2019 the BCP Council was formed, (without referendum) as Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council

At the time Poole had £6m in surplus, sadly now BCP is £44m in deficit.

Actively negotiating redundancy of some of its Poole Park Gardeners & Maintenance workers, who protect those many historical artefacts.

**Here is the rub, without due prior public notification or consultation, the Wonderful Main Access Point at Whitecliff was closed by BCP to traffic on the 17<sup>th</sup> January!**

**This closure Signage, Officer Time, Consultation is likely to cost £50K, we have outstanding a FOI to establish those facts**

We attempted to reason with BCP, to no avail. We formed a group called "Leave Poole Park Alone" within two weeks of formation we had 1300 Facebook local followers. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January we held a protest of 250 people, we were covered in our Local Bournemouth Echo, the Daily Mail & Express.

We followed this up with similar numbers on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Many of our members are from Poole Multi-Generational families

**Why, what has changed, you may ask?**

**Well the Portfolio Holder for the Environment lives & breaths Bicycles! He holds regular meetings with BHActive (previously known as Bournemouth Cycling Forum). Cycling Rebellion are also any aggressive group, links also to the National Cycling Network. But he ignores any contrary view that disagrees with his minority!**

**Some of the Cycling Fraternity are actively being asked to complete this Poole Park Consultation document, despite residing in India, Amsterdam etc**

**We are concerned that the original concept of Poole Park is being Hijacked by all & sundry & Johnnie Come Lately's!**

**We have written to BCP CEO Graham Farrant, BCP Governance Officer Janie Berry, the leader of the Council Vikki Slade (email addresses above)**

**We ask that you help us protect the wonderful heritage of Poole Park for many locals with no gardens, cramp flats, no views, to enjoy the health & mental wellbeing of many disabled & elderly folks.**

**Many Thanks**

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**Subject:** Poole Park Whitecliff gate -trial closure and consultation

Dear Mr Hadley,

I have completed the online 'Have Your Say Consultation online, but felt I need to write to you to express the extent of my concerns, and to strongly object to this trial, for the following reasons:

### **A) Past usage of park**

I have used the Whitecliff Gate as an entrance and exit for over 40 years, as a pedestrian, cyclist, motorcyclist, and car driver. I have always driven or ridden within the park considerately and cautiously, and have NEVER experienced or witnessed any issues whatsoever. There is a low speed limit, speed humps, and narrow sections, particularly by the disabled bays by the Kingland Road end. The road is small, leaving many acres of grassed and play areas for people to relax and readily enjoy the amenity.

I visit the park on perhaps 3 to 5 days per week, often with friends or relatives, and usually stop within the park, for a walk and or coffee. Normally I enter though the Whitecliff entrance, park, and turn, leaving through the same route as entry, but occasionally I do drive through, without stopping, as I have cause to travel between Lower Parkstone and Hamworthy quite often. If doing so I do not regard myself to be 'rat-running', i.e. using it as a 'short cut'. It is simply a very peaceful and scenic route, causing no harm to anyone or any wildlife.

### **B) Objections to trial closure of Whitecliff gate:**

1) With this trial closure I now have to enter either through the one way entrance at the former Civic Centre (0.7 miles extra), or enter through the Kingland Road entrance (1.5 miles extra), and exit at Kingland Road. This sole exit point requires ALL cars in the park to leave that way, past disabled bays, where kerbs have been scuffed as the road is quite narrow. They then have an awkward angle to turn right, as visibility is poor to the left. There is a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the right. **I believe the Kingland Road exit point area could become an accident blackspot, which could then be used as an excuse to further restrict vehicle access, or even prevent it.**

2) After exiting, vehicles immediately have to approach the busy Kingland Roundabout, to join main roads which are often busy. In my case, to return home, I have to skirt the park, on Mount Pleasant Road, Parkstone Road, and all around the former Civic Centre roundabout, on to the Sandbanks Road, and negotiate the railway bridge, over 1.6 mile back to the vicinity of the Whitecliff gate vicinity. **This detour will add to traffic congestion and emissions, very close to the park or just outside the park's wrought iron fence along Parkstone Road. Some cars will even have to travel further within the park, going back out the way they came in, instead of simply using the nearest exit.**

3) The trial claims to aim at 'improving' safety, but the past record is good - with **NO** recorded instances, whatsoever, of accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists according to an experienced Police Officer.

4) There is no 'special wildlife' in Poole Park which BCP claims need protecting, and the council have never provided any cases of conflict with wildlife. In reality, the Council culls wildlife from time to time.

5) Claims have been made by the pro-closure groups, that the park is a 'rat run'. or 'cut through', but I consider these to be grossly exaggerated. On pressing one of these groups, they recently claimed that the 'rush hour' was between 3.30 and 6.30pm., which included 'school runs' and 'office workers'. Personally, on two pre-trial recent drives through the park, deliberately to witness the alleged 'rush hour', there were NO cars whatsoever, other than mine, at about 5pm on a weekday. Once through the keyhole bridge, just two cars approached me from Sandbanks Road. Another day, at 4.45pm, there were just a few cars travelling through the park. That said, I accept that traffic may fluctuate over a period, but these are genuine recent experiences.

6) There have also been claims by some, that cars 'speed through', or 'thunder' through, or have 'wacky races'. I have never seen such activity, so again these are exaggerated, particularly by a local 'active travel' group.

7) The closure of the Whitecliff gate is unhelpful to those disabled drivers who wish to park in the disabled spaces between the lake and swan lake, by the miniature railway track. Access is now more difficult for those who park there, and they will need to execute a 3-5 point turn to exit, in a narrow road. I have witnessed cars redcently mounting the kerb in that stretch of narrow road. I believe the Equality Act may well have been contravened by disadvantaging the elderly or disabled.

8) The imposition of a trial closure without prior consultation is extremely unfair, possibly illegal, and may lead to another costly mistake for BCP, as did the recent Keyhole Bridge handling, where costly legal fees were incurred. NO statistics or data have been provided by BCP to support this trial, and without stopping vehicles and asking the purpose of the journey, there can be no substantive evidence to justify the closure.

9) A trial in January cannot be considered a fair representation, bearing in mind the weather and dark evenings. Tourism is important to the local economy, but no indication of summer/school holiday volumes will be available. The trials '24hr closure is 'overkill', if any 'perceived problem' is only the afternoon 'rush hour' which allegedly includes 'school runs'. Incidentally, of course, schools are on holiday for lengthy periods throughout the year, during which 'school runs' simply do not occur.

10) The road from the central junction in the park, to the Whitecliff gate becomes a cul de sac, with this gate closed. With no passing cars it could become an area in which anti-social behaviour or assaults take place. Travellers have set up camps within the park on two or three occasions in recent years, and now this cul de sac would make a good scenic spot for such an encampment, all along the roadside.

11) I believe there may well be extreme bias or even conflicts of interest within the council, as a number of Councillors have been very vocal with their support for the trial. They are climate campaigners who appear to be cycling enthusiasts and very anti-motorist. Additionally, another councillor is a Just Stop Oil campaigner, and is an owner of a bike company. Some of these parties are listed on the BH Active Travel committee, which is described on their website as 'Advisors' to BCP, and whose 'Chair', has recently referred to the Meyrick Park and Kings Park arrangements, and has stated that this Poole Park trial is a 'first step' towards that, very much worrying locals as to what future plans may be.

It is quite remarkable that individuals who are members of BHat and/or the Keyhole Bridge Group, who were instrumental in costing BCP £120k in legal fees over a judicial review and Cycling UK involvement, appear to have been provided, by BCP, with bulk supplies of 'Have Your Say' leaflets to distribute, near the Whitecliff gate, by approaching and encouraging members of the public to vote in the consultation, in favour of the trial closure. **I would like to know please, what, exactly, is the 'connection', official or otherwise, between BCP and those distributors?**

12) I understand that when the park land was donated by Lord Wimborne, to the People, in 1886, **open access** was to be allowed. That should be upheld.

### **C) Anticipated impact of the trial according to BCP**

1) The trial is claimed to have an aim to 'create an enhanced park environment', and to 'reduce air pollution', and improve safety. In my opinion, for the various reasons cited above, the trial will not achieve those aims. Why cyclists should be given such concern is difficult to comprehend, when they can cycle through the park so easily and quickly, and alternatively also have a choice to use the expensive new cycleway from Whitecliff to Baiter.

2) BCP claim the trial would be 'likely to' have a 'minor impact' on the surrounding highway network, as it already absorbs the morning 'rush hour' as the park is closed until 10am. The afternoon period cannot be compared to the morning, as there are far more people about, especially in warmer times of the year, summer and school holiday times. Tourism is hugely important to the local economy, and with all cars leaving through one exit the Kingland Road and Roundabout the roads could become gridlocked.

3) BCP recognised that Cafe concessions could be adversely affected in terms of trade. I am sure it will be, as I, and therefore passengers with me, will be very much discouraged by the detours necessary and congestion which will be encountered.

4) BCP re-affirm that two entrances will still be available, but they do not clearly indicate or emphasise, adequately, that Kingland Road will be the **SOLE** exit point.

### **D) Costs & possible legal fees**

As a council tax payer, which are about to increase by almost 5%, I am very concerned at the waste of money evidenced over the last few years, but particularly

in respect of the £85k for legal fees re the keyhole bridge Judicial Review, then the payment of £35k to Cycling UK, all because the council did not adhere to correct procedures, legislation or protocol. I do not want to learn that BCP is making the same errors this time around. How has this trial been authorised and budgeted for, please?

**I am sorry to say that I believe a deal has been struck with Cycling UK, as they were claiming 'victory' long before BCP made any announcement to the public about the trial closure. What is your response to this please?**

I would expect that you will receive a vast amount of correspondence about this trial, some in favour, some against, but I would appreciate it if you could reply to me, before the end of the trial period, with any comments you may have.

I have been a local council tax payer for 47 years, and I have never before been so dismayed by council conduct as I am now. Poole used to have a tourism slogan of 'Poole Is A Beautiful Place', but having taken away 42 parking space at the beauty spot Evening Hill, and now reducing access/emtry points to Poole Park, the Council is making it harder for people to enjoy the area.

Yours sincerely,

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I strongly object to the closure of traffic into Poole Park from the Whitecliff entrance. I am 86 years old, registered disabled and partially sighted. I live close to Whitecliff and closing this gate will ruin one of the few pleasures I am able to experience. I feel I will be discriminated because I am disabled.

Every fortnight, my son in law picks me up and takes me for a drive. I like to go past Whitecliff Park and remember where I used to take my children years ago and then pass under Keyhole bridge. If there are model boats sailing we will watch them. We then enter the park & like to look out for the train followed by the lake & see the swans and geese. All these things are pointed out and described to me as my eyesight is very poor. I would love to get out but as walking is so painful and I am so slow we just drive through. We proceed past the fountain and exit by the swimming pool gate. I have a garden so sometimes stop at Cherries nursery where my family will run in and buy my plants. We then go over Seldown Bridge and park in the disabled bays on the Quay where I sit & watch the world go by whilst my family go for a short stroll. We then turn around and do the same journey home in reverse. I believe I have a legal right to use this route as it was gifted for the enjoyment of the people of Poole, of which I am one of and I thoroughly enjoy using.

Also, previously my family would regularly buy fish and chips and take them to the picnic benches at Evening Hill where we would enjoy them as a family. We could park next to the benches using my blue badge. BCP also removed this facility for me. We have tried using the disabled bays in Alington Rd but its just too far for me. I am so angry about the removal of both these pleasures for me. This seems to be coming from a very selfish vocal group who have no regard for anyone else.

I had to dictate this due to my poor eyesight.

Posted this anon because this is not my story to tell but belongs to an elderly neighbour who asked me to submit this on the consultation a couple of weeks ago, she obviously doesn't use Facebook but said I could post this.

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Subject: Poole park gate closure

Good Morning.

We have added some questions and background to why we are opposing the Poole Park Gates closure.

Please confirm that our objections are recorded as Two independent objections.

As we only have the one joint family email address we have compiled this email to you, together.

We would like to give a background to why we object against the closure of the gates at the Whitecliff end of Poole Park.

- This is the peoples' park, and you are preventing all access through the carriage drive.
- You leave only one emergency exit for any emergency vehicle.
- The exit onto the roundabout is not easy to get into and is dangerous.
- You have caused queuing on the exit road past disabled people parking.
- This is causing higher emissions as there is no flow of traffic.
- Elderly and disabled people are being disadvantaged.
- Mental health affected as disabled may drive through the park from the roundabout grab an ice cream and exit via the keyhole bridge to head to Sandbanks.
- Wildlife has never had any incident in the 63 years of knowing the Park
- Present council attempting to placate cycling UK because they lost a court action and part of settlement was to make park safe.
- It already is safe, so this action is a Bcp requirement, not a resident wants or need. Bcp need to go back to cycling group and apologise for their mistake. If Bcp hadn't wanted to close the keyhole bridge they wouldn't be in this mess. Then they need to resign.
- Council in massive debt but concentrates on a road closure.
- Park now more dangerous at night especially with the recent officer cuts.
- More dangerous now to elderly disabled and pedestrian as cycles and eScooters which now go faster due to lack of cars and disregard pedestrians. Accidents will increase, there are none now as cycles must share with cars, and both go slower.
- Bikes cannot be identified in an accident as no registration.
- Baiter cycleway needs prioritising before spending money on other vanity projects.
- I believe this council is anti-car as stated by councillor Hadley that we 'must reduce the dominance of the car' and he is the environment portfolio officer.
- You keep pushing congestion emissions yet go out of your way to reduce the free flow of traffic which is a duty if the council. Please note the government set out a 'Plan for drivers' on October the 2<sup>nd</sup> to support peoples freedom to use cars and curb enforcement measures.
- This council hold meetings with activists groups and is heavily influenced by cycle groups,

- Council pertains to environmental emergency but cuts down healthy trees and builds on farmland.
- The council needs to stop assuming what people want.
- No resident has signed up to any climate emergency.
- The council needs to communicate projects properly by door-to-door leaflets, not just expecting people to read the echo or have access to technology or social media sites. Very divisive
- Money needs to be spent as a benefit to all not just the few. Note motorists comprise the majority of travel therefore money should be spent appropriately
- As a council you pick on the most vulnerable of people who are unable to defend themselves such as kicking off the disabled in preference for cyclists such as on evening hill.
- The park is historic and given to the people of Poole what right have to to restrict driving through. There are very few parks as unique as this which allows for viewing the park without having to stop. You seem to be a council that wants to destroy Poole's heritage.
- As a council you need to compromise nit just bully through actions. To just close a road and then say we will consult now its shut is not the correct procedure.
- The consultation/survey does not allow everyone n the conurbation the chance to participate of comment. The survey itself is flawed and open to abuse.
- Residents were not fully aware of this closure. Many I have talked to are horrified and did not know it was happening.
- Not everyone has access to Facebook, go to the library or read the Echo, especially the elderly who are confused as to why the gate is closed off so this is a very closed survey and not truly representative of the residents.
- Many people like to drive past the model yacht lake and the railway which they can no longer do. The gate closure seems to have extended to the roadway form the park in that only disabled are allowed up it and the section from the disabled parking to the gate has been fenced off. This road is still accessible by all, and a turning circle will need to be constructed if the gate remains closed. This section of park is not part of the councils remit and must remain open to all vehicles right up to the gate even if the gate remains closed.

## Options

1. Stay open
2. Close during evening rush hour as the morning rush hour but open during day to prevent any "rat run". I note the council state this option was trialled.
3. Please can we have the results?
4. Close completely to road vehicles including cycles, skateboarders and eScooters.
5. Add speed cameras.

Please can the council explain why they are not willing to compromise? Why only this one option?

Regards

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**Subject:** Poole Park Closure

Vikki Slade, BCP Councillor

Dear Ms Slade

I would like to register my objection to the closure of the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park and request that you do everything in your power to ensure it remains open. I can see no good reason for its closure, either temporarily or permanently, but can think of many reasons why it needs to remain open.

### **Fewer Park Users**

Almost by definition, restricting access will reduce visitor numbers. I know other gates remain open but convenience is important. Anything that restricts access has to be a bad thing. People need to be encouraged to use our wonderful open spaces. Installing a barrier to access is the exact opposite of what our public servants need to be doing. You need to be encouraging more people to be making use of our wonderful facilities, not fewer.

### **Recreational Activity**

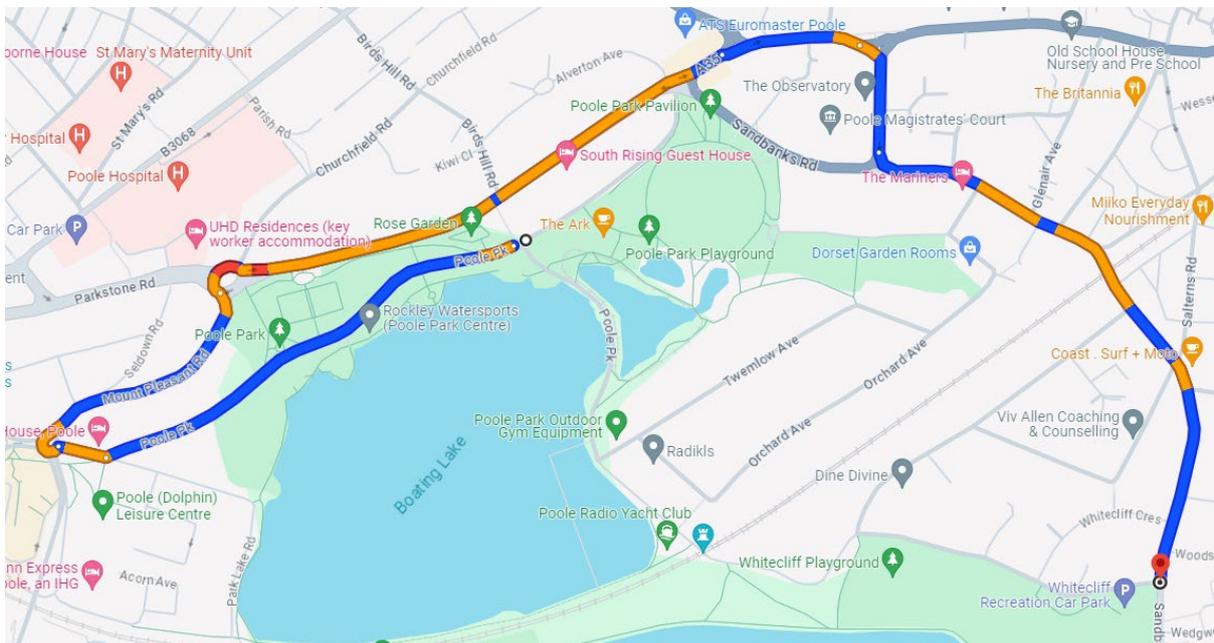
A drive through the park is a wonderful recreational activity in of itself and is enjoyed by many people. The drive alongside Whitecliff Road, even before you enter the park, provides a lovely elevated view across Whitecliff Park, Poole Harbour and over to Brownsea Island. It's also fun to admire the nice houses on the other side of the road before you reach the charming keyhole bridge. The drive through can even be a little exciting when flooded! Generations of children and grownups have enjoyed this quirky fun approach to Poole Park. I always look out for the old boys with their model boats - it gives me great pleasure to see the intensity with which they race them. Next comes the stunning Victorian gate posts; which actually lift my spirits as I enter the park. They are more than just gate posts, they are symbolic and of great architectural interest - which is presumably why they remain in place without actually having any gates. Next I look out for the model train with children having a fun day out and the ducks and geese crossing the road. It is simply wonderful. Closing the Whitecliffe gate would deny these pleasures to many thousands of people but the impact would be disproportionately highest amongst the elderly and the disabled.

### **Elderly & Disabled**

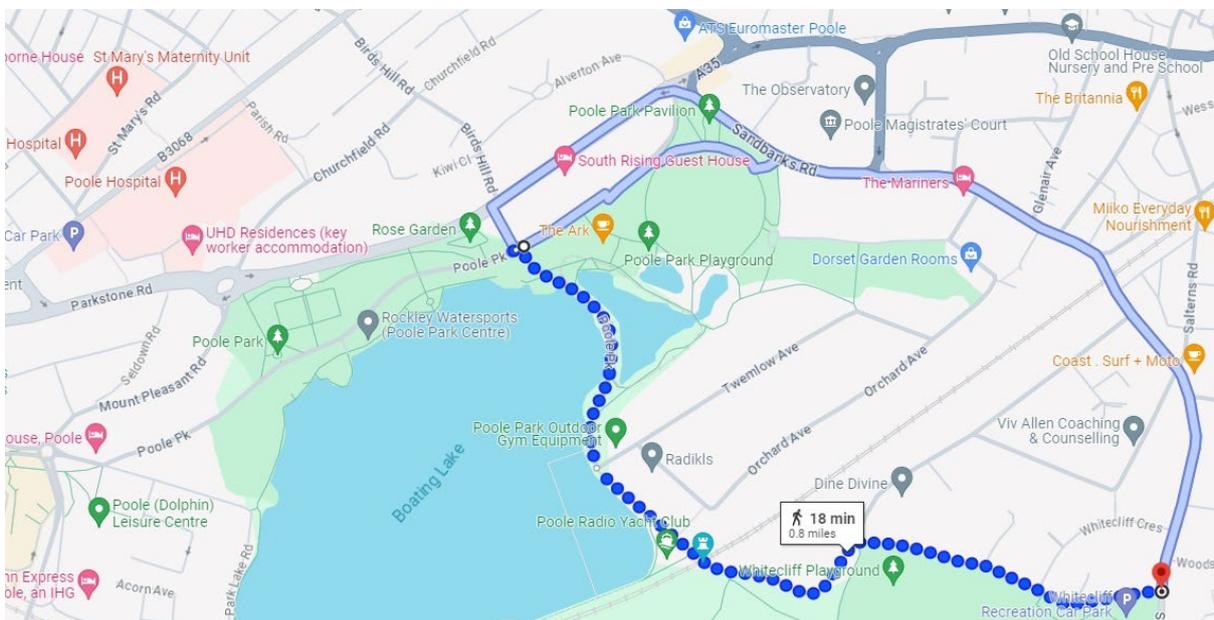
My recreational activity comments are particularly pertinent for anyone with mobility issues. Poole has a large elderly population, many of whom would love to be able to walk or cycle through the park but find themselves unable to do so, so they choose to drive through it instead - and this includes me! Yes, I could enter via another gate but this would deny me all of the pleasures I described under Recreational Activity. The journey matters more than the destination!

### **Inconvenience**

Visitors to Poole Park approaching from or exiting to the east would be greatly inconvenienced, just look at the 2.2 mile drive around needed to exit east from the centre of the park. These screenshots were taken from Google Maps.



Under normal circumstances, with the gate open, the distance should only be 0.8 miles.



The distance I need to travel has more than doubled with the closure of the gate.

## Road Congestion

The gate closure is forcing more traffic to use the already congested, vibrant and busy local roads. The above screen shots were taken at 3:30 pm on Tuesday 6th February, which was a cold windy winters day (so very few people were using the park) and it was outside of rush hour. Nevertheless, Google was reporting

congestion (orange) and stationary traffic (red) along much of the alternative route. The “test” period is taking place in the depth of winter - when park traffic is at its lightest. Road congestion is likely to become a very serious problem in warmer weather and in the tourist season.

The alternative route contains several traffic pinch points including

- An awkward ‘blind’ right turn exiting the park via the only available gate.
- Two very busy, often heavily congested town centre roundabouts. In my humble opinion both these roundabouts would benefit from traffic alleviation measures. Forcing more traffic to use these junctions makes no sense at all.
- The gyratory with all of its associated traffic lights near Poole Magistrates Court
- The railway tunnel / bridge on Sandbanks Road - which is only wide enough for one way traffic.
- The route also contains numerous pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes and shops all of which make it unsuitable as a park by-pass road.

### **Park Congestion**

Forcing all traffic to use the same exit is problematic because the exit road is narrow. There is only sufficient width for confident drivers in small vehicles to pass without having to slow down or stop. Some drivers hesitate and often do not drive through unless the route is totally clear. On busy summer days I can see the following problems arising

- A significant build up of traffic in both directions as soon as two vehicles are unable or unwilling to pass each other, clogging up the park with stationary vehicles.
- Emergency vehicles unable to get through or significantly delayed.
- Cyclists already ride on the pavements in this road because it is too dangerous for them to be squeezed by vehicles trying to pass each other.
- Damage to vehicles parked in the disabled bays, caused by other vehicles trying to squeeze past.
- Now that the roundabout has been removed people are and will be pulling U turns all over the place, causing further congestion.

### **Tourism**

A park drive through is widely enjoyed by visitors to Poole. I do not think we should be doing anything which deters tourism and clogging up the alternative route will certainly do that. It’s a double whammy for tourists.

### **Money**

I know the costs will not be huge but there will be costs associated with the closure of the gate including:

- New park gates or barricade of some kind

- A new roundabout or turning area inside the park
- Widening the road at the eastern exit/entrance
- New road signage
- Time. Time is money and the council has already wasted too much of it on this proposal. Cut our losses and please stop now. Haven't you got anything more productive to do? The council is hugely in debt and needs to concentrate on ways to save money, not spend more money. Every penny counts.

## **People**

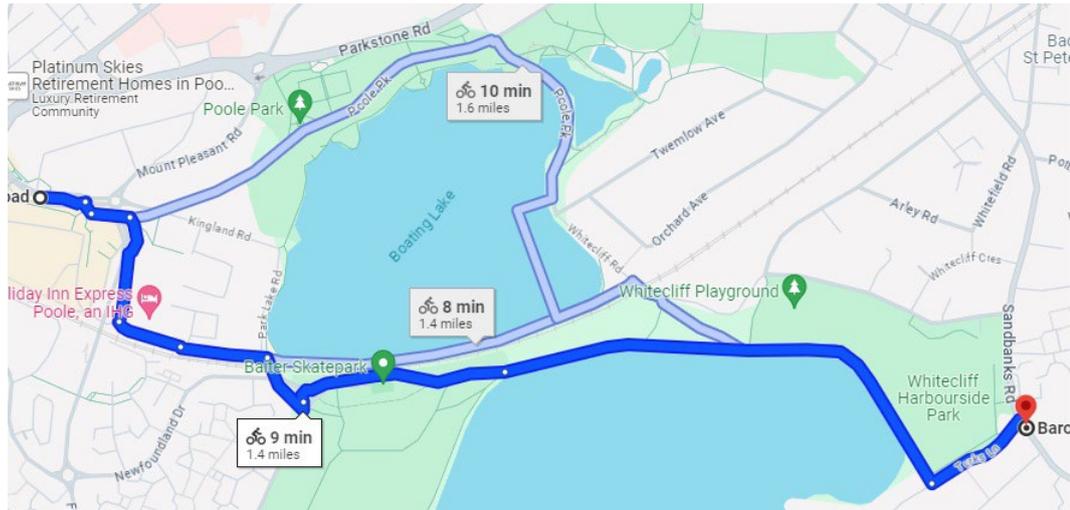
Please listen to what the people want. The number of people I've seen objecting to the closure on social media runs well into 4 figures. Closing the gate is upsetting everyone and causing a lot of ill feeling towards the council. People believe the council only goes through box ticking consultation exercises and railroads through their ideas regardless.

I have not been able to find out why BCP Council wants to close the gate so it is difficult to provide counter arguments. The following are therefore based on rumours I have heard or seen online.

## **Cycling**

I heard that the closure of the gate is part of the council's plan to promote cycling. Few cyclists use Poole Park for cycling not because cars can drive through the park but because:

- The park is too small for cycling. It only takes a few minutes for a cyclist to pass through. No serious cyclist is going to ride around the park for the same reason. I have never seen any cyclist using the circular cycle path.
- The route through the park is too chaotic and busy with very slow moving traffic, speed bumps (a cyclist's nightmare), playing children and pedestrians, dogs, ducks and geese all crossing the road without looking.
- Who wants to cycle through the keyhole bridge when it's flooded? The risk of this is sufficient deterrent for most cyclists.
- There is a much better purpose built route along the harbourside in Whiteclif and Baiter. This is the route Google recommends cyclists take when travelling from Lilliput to Poole Bus station



## LTN

I heard that BCP wants to make more low traffic neighbourhoods, making it more difficult for people to travel by car and to encourage (force) them to use public transport or bicycles instead. I'd like to remind BCP that this area has a high proportion of elderly and disabled people who rely on their cars because they are unable to cycle and who use public transport only as a very last resort. If this is indeed council policy I think the council should be leading by example and travel by bus. This way you'll truly be able to assess just how rubbish public transport is. You could start by making the council office car park pay and display, just like all other BCP car parks are for the general public. Councillors should no longer receive a mileage allowance but they could reclaim their bus fares instead.

## Rat Run

I heard the council wants to close the gate to prevent the park being used as a rat run.

- The park is already closed during morning rush hour. Why close the gate all day every day if there are concerns about the evening rush hour?
- No motorist would choose the park as a rat run because it is a longer and, most of the time, a much slower route. The traffic calming measures already in place and the respect motorists show to other park users (including the ducks and geese) mean that vehicles travel slowly - severely delaying and deterring any prospective rat runners.
- People drive through the park, even if they are on their way to or from work, because it is a very enjoyable drive. Why deprive people of this? Does the park have more road traffic accidents than the alternative route? I suspect not. I suspect the park has an exemplary road traffic accident record. This could end if traffic is all forced to squeeze through a single narrow exit.

Yours Sincerely

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**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed Poole Park Gate Closure

**Subject:**

I write regarding the proposed closure of Poole Park, Twemlow road entrance, to which I am opposed. There are numerous issues to be considered here. The Keyhole bridge is part of a scenic route taken, one of many routes in the UK. A lot of people on the route may stop to use the cafes or the park, to stop for a while. The Gov would like the public to use public spaces for the good of our mental well-being, fitness and socialising but BCP appear to be making most places inaccessible by these restrictions or by the introduction of parking meters.

It would be interesting to know how much the current traffic configuration cost, the chicanes, the traffic system, the useless larger parking spaces for the disabled at the Kingland Road entrance, serving only to restrict two lanes of traffic from passing easily and not all in use cost. HS2 springs to mind here, the money poured into it, then stopped. What an abhorrent waste of your electorates money.

We are unable to stop on

Evening Hill even for half an hour since the pandemic, I know that my elderly relatives would be unable to walk up it, to enjoy the vista as was previously an option. A shared path / parking for cyclists and cars would have worked here.

I read a comment by a local councillor that the council do not, 'give in to the people who shout the loudest', does that work both ways? The cycling fraternity? There are many redundant cycle ways throughout the BCP area, as in the Dorset Council area. There is a lovely cycle route along White cliff to Poole which is well supported. Why add another? I support a U3a group in Poole Park throughout the School Holidays. Yes, whilst I can use a bus, the walk from the bus stop at the bus station, is a fair distance exacerbated by carrying musical equipment and a seat and as most of the group's members are older than me, in their 70s / 80s, the proposed closure will not serve their needs to access the park.

I understand that parking meters are to be introduced along Whitecliff Road, there are no homes or houses along the park side, there are roads with homes surrounding that area though, where people will park instead.

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Which area would you like to tell us about: Parks and Open Spaces

Details:

Councillor Andy Hadley has angered many Poole residents by blocking the gates at the entrance to Poole Park. He lost the argument over Keyhole Bridge so stupidly blockaded the entrance to the park.

He needs to win hearts and minds. Not make enemies. He has caused more exhaust fumes by forcing the few cars who enter the park there to drive further, and cause a small build-up at the Seldown roundabout.

People take their elderly relatives to Poole Park. Charities take disabled children and

adults.

I agree in reducing cars but this is not how to do it.

Do you have any photos or documents to upload: No

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**Subject:** Poole Park - Proposed Whitecliff Gate Closure - OBJECTION

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF RELEVANT COUNCILLORS/COUNCIL OFFICERS AND THE BCP COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

Having submitted my response to the online survey I am writing to re-emphasise my absolute objection to this proposal and to express my outrage at the manner in which the temporary closure has been implemented and the lack of transparency and clarity about the potential next steps that BCP may take.

I was born in Poole and have been a resident here for my entire 63 years. Some of my earliest memories are of being driven through Whitecliff and into the park with my parents - sometimes to stop in the park, sometimes not. I also have years of happy memories with my own children. I continue to use the Whitecliff Gate on average 6 times per week (3 return journeys) to visit elderly family in the centre of Poole - at least I did until this idiotic closure was implemented. I use this route not because it is quicker, a rat run to avoid congestion or because I have an innate desire to terrorise cyclists and pedestrians. I choose to use the route because it is a more scenic, bucolic option, to view the beautiful scenery we are so lucky to have on our doorstep, to enjoy the various wildlife, and to see other people enjoying the park whether on foot, on a bike, or in a car.

The park was given to the people of Poole. It is 'The People's Park', and since its official opening in 1890 it has been accessible by all with no exclusions or prejudices - and that is how it should remain. I do not believe that a small group of individuals (elected or otherwise) should have the right to take unilateral decisions about the park, particularly when those decisions have a significant impact on certain categories of individuals - particularly the disabled and the elderly, many of whom can only access and enjoy the park and from the inside of a car. I consider this entire exercise to be undemocratic and discriminatory.

If the outcome of the temporary closure of the Whitecliff Gate and any feedback gathered during the 'consultation period' is to be considered (rather than ignored) as part of the decision as to whether the closure should be made permanent, its timing is absolutely ridiculous.

**- How can a closure spanning two of the quietest months of the year provide any meaningful information as to the potential impact during summer months when visitor numbers lead to an exponential increase in traffic and visitors to the centre of Poole, Poole's beaches and the park itself?**

The online survey - with questions already biased towards closure - appears, to me at least, to be open to abuse (admittedly by those in favour of the closure and those against).

**- What controls are in place to ensure one vote per person?**

**- What controls are in place to limit responses to those who actually reside in the BCP area?**

**- Will the results of the survey be published, and if so, when?**

Other than the online survey, the 'consultation period' does not appear to have provided any opportunity for consultation whatsoever.

**- Will there be any opportunities for open dialogue/debate, or is the flawed online survey the only mechanism available to provide/gather any feedback?**

The published rationale and potential benefits of a permanent closure of the Whitecliff Gate have absolutely no basis whatsoever.

Increased safety

During the 63 years I have been visiting or passing through Poole Park, I have never witnessed or experienced anything other than a harmonious co-existence between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. I am sure that there are a few in each of these groups who are less considerate to others, but I'm equally sure that the vast majority of people treat each of these groups with respect. I have never witnessed any accidents or any incidents of cars causing danger to any of the three groups. I have witnessed cyclists and e-scooters using the pavements, and joggers running in the road, but I assume that those proposing and pursuing a permanent closure don't consider these to be dangerous.

**- Where are the facts and the empirical data that evidence any accidents involving motor vehicles since 1890, or the increased risk to safety that they pose?**

Reduced Congestion

I really struggle with the idea that a permanent closure will reduce congestion in the park. In fact, I believe that reducing the number of exit points from 2 to 1 will lead to an **increase** in congestion and that there will be long tailbacks in the park from the Kingland Road exit - particularly during the summer and other holiday periods.

There will also be an increase in congestion on the already congested Civic Centre, Parkstone Road and the already treacherous Mount Pleasant roundabout.

**- Linking back to my earlier point - how is the potential impact on congestion being monitored/assessed and how will the temporary closure provide any meaningful input to an informed decision?**

Reduced Emissions

I am neither an eco scientist nor an expert on emissions/pollution, but again, I do feel that this assertion is seriously flawed.

Traffic that would previously have used the Whitecliff Gate to enter the park will either continue to enter the park via the East Gate (no reduction in emissions) or travel towards Poole along Parkstone Road.

Traffic that would previously have used the Whitecliff Gate to exit the park will also, in all likelihood, also use Parkstone Road as an alternative route to Sandbanks Road.

Unless I am mistaken the lack of barrier between the park and Parkstone Road means that there is nothing to prevent emissions drifting towards, into and through the park. The long queues/tailbacks at the only remaining exit will also lead to an increase in emissions as cars will remain stationary or moving slowly for a longer period.

**- Where are the scientific facts and the empirical data that evidence and support any reduction in emissions as a result of the Whitecliff Gate closure?**

**- Linking back to my earlier point - how is the potential impact on emissions being monitored/assessed and how will the temporary closure provide any meaningful input to an informed decision?**

I am not anti-cycling - indeed I am a cyclist myself - but this entire exercise appears to be to be pandering to what is still a minority group harbouring feelings of entitlement. I feel that enough has already been done in the BCP area to support cycling and the majority of the facilities already provided remain under utilised. There are already two car free routes from Whitecliff to Poole - one in Poole Park via the pathway between the boating lake and the railway track, and another via the cycle path from Whitecliff through Baiter to Poole Quay. Neither of these options are available to motor vehicles. Why is another car free route needed for cyclists?

Poole is not, and is unlikely to ever be, 'Amsterdam like', and the notion that this closure will encourage more motorists to ditch their cars in favour of bicycles is, frankly, ridiculous. I fully support the desire to make cycling safer and more accessible to members of the public who are fit and able enough to embrace it. However, the proposed closure of the Whitecliff Gate is an unnecessary solution to a problem that does not exist and simultaneously excludes/penalises the elderly and those with disabilities.

I would be grateful if you could consider my objection and provide responses to the questions I have posed (highlighted in bold).

Kind Regards

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**Subject: POOLE PARK "RAT RUNS", "POLLUTION" & "SAFETY"**

**POOLE PARK "RAT RUNS", "POLLUTION" & "SAFETY"**

These 3 phrases have been banded around as the justification for closing the Whitecliff entrance to Poole Park. There has been no data provided to support these claims so I have been to Google to get some independent data:

Google Street View has images of the closed section of the road from:

April 2009-no cars,

July 2012-1 car,

June 2015-no cars,

July 2017-1 car,

June 2018-1 car,

June 2019-no cars

April 2018 aerial view-2 cars.

That's 7 independently random times/dates. These images seem to be taken between late morning & afternoon, perfect times to capture a "rat run". The attached images are all from an identical location to give a fair representation.

No evidence of a rat-run, pollution or safety here. These images match my lifetime recollection of cars on this section of Poole Park, historically the quietest part of the park.

**SAFETY:**

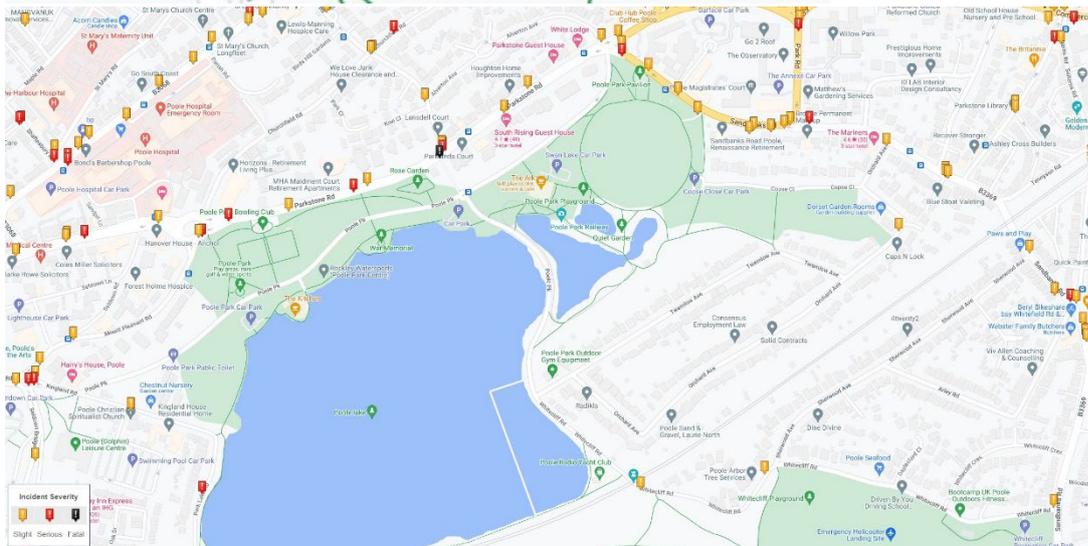
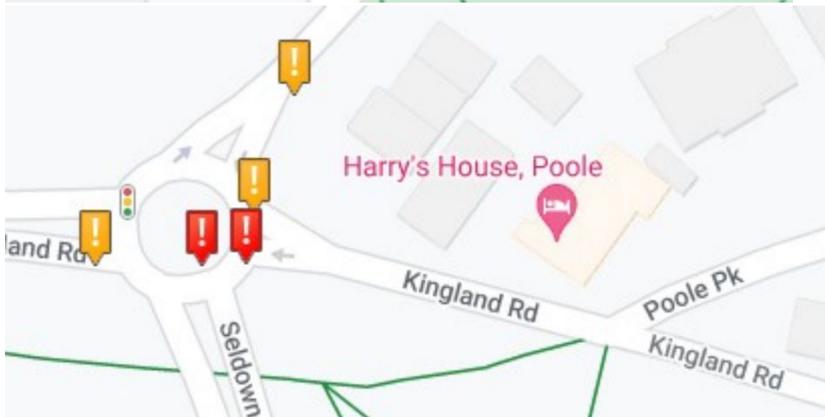
Data & images from [crashmap.co.uk](http://crashmap.co.uk) has no recorded accidents in the park which matches all the reports confirmed so far. However, the proposed diversion from the Whitecliff entrance to the Civic entrance means driving past 10 accident spots and the return journey drives past 16 recorded accident spots. Add this to the fact that the journey length has tripled, this also multiplies the time the vehicle is exposed to danger (cars, pedestrians and cyclists put at risk on Sandbanks Rd & Parkstone Rd) Therefore, the previously proven safe route has been diverted to a more dangerous route "to improve safety".

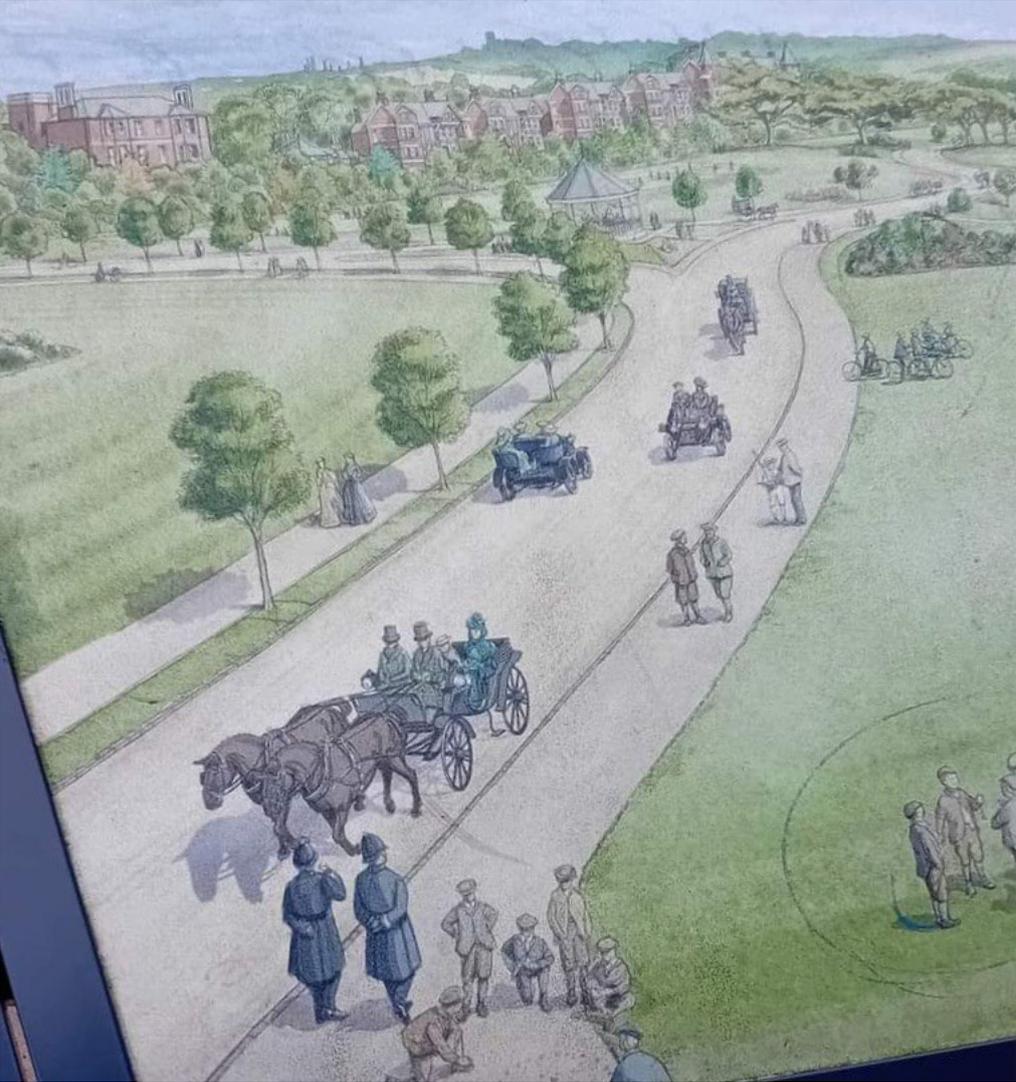
The only proposed entrance to the park will be from the Civic Centre entrance. This is the most hazardous of all the entrances as confirmed by the 4 accidents recorded on this junction. It is also the only blind entrance to the park & the busiest pedestrian entrance as it is located by the college and is very busy with students at lunchtime (often not paying attention to traffic being distracted on their phones). It is also not uncommon for cyclists to (illegally) exit the park here on the blind corner creating possibility of a head on with a car. There is a pedestrian crossing and multiple lanes. Tourists won't see this entrance until its too late, causing them to drive past or brake suddenly adding more reasons for accidents here! This junction is dangerous because there are so many hazards and distractions for the drivers here. Use of this junction should be kept to a minimum.

ENVIRONMENT: From Whitecliff Road, to drive to the fountain area and return used to be under a mile in total. The new route via the civic entrance is now over 3 miles, in stop start traffic alongside the park perimeter, creating more congestion on the road and more than triples the pollution!

How does the above contribute to the BCP's Climate & Ecological Emergency Declaration? It appears to be counterproductive.















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**Subject:** Poole Park Consultation - please add this objection for each of the four of us, and note comments.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing as a local resident, firmly opposed to the recent closure of the entrance and exit gate in Poole Park.

I write on behalf of my family who live in BH16 5 and my elderly mother (93) who lives right by the park at BH15 2. We use the park daily for different purposes and simply don't see the need for the closure and can already see more traffic queued to exit the park and queued on the Parkstone Road and queued at the tunnel on the Sandbanks Road before Lilliput.

Due to the timing of the consultation, there appeared a lack of awareness of the trial closure and it felt deliberately, poorly advertised and inaccessible. My family have

stood with a mixture of BCP residents, including motorists, cyclists, walking group members, parents with young children and the disabled and carers to protest the closure. My elderly mum has shared with the various residences on Parkstone Road, who also knew nothing about this.

The original spirit of inclusivity in the Park must be preserved and retaining all access, including to those wishing to access or drive through the Park by vehicle, is vitally important to ensure that it can be enjoyed in as many ways as possible by all residents and visitors wishing to use it for both recreation and wellbeing.

Whilst I do not personally see a need, I would support the improvement of traffic calming measures that would make travelling by car through the park of no time saving benefit to those who wish to use it solely for that purpose. In short, this would discourage so called 'rat runners', not that there seem to be a huge amount or anyone travelling at speed owing to the existing measures. I certainly have always navigated the route through slowly and carefully whether driving my electric car, riding my bike, walking my dog, or pushing a wheelchair.

We would also support a closure at the time the park is claimed to be used as a 'rat run' (5:00pm until 6:00pm) to keep the gate open at all other times in both directions.

We feel the closure contravenes the original intent and spirit of the gift of the land to the people of Poole. The original intention was that the Park should have a carriage route. At the time carriages were known as horse, horseless and motorised carriages. Therefore, this would have included cars.

Despite the increase in cars using the road over the years no recorded serious incidents have occurred, as all Park visitors benefit from numerous speed restricting controls. Instead the closure sends more traffic onto areas that do have accident statistics.

The closure does not achieve the whole aim of the BCP Health and Wellbeing Strategy, as it excludes those with busy and stressful lives who benefit from taking a gentle, calming, drive through the Park. Or those recovering from illness or receiving end of life care who also enjoy the drive. It also excludes those who benefit from driving through the Park on route to their destination, allowing a short time to sit and enjoy the Park, or to allow their children a short time to play in the Park.

Driving into and out of the Seldown entrance would be followed by a lengthy time sat in congestion at the Civic Centre. Many, or even most, residents have busy lives. Adding time restrictions to their use of the Park would make this untenable, and is therefore, unreasonable.

The current closure leaves only one Park exit to traffic. This restriction excludes the ability to leave the Park at the Whitecliff exit in cases where this would be the shortest route to their destination. Therefore, adding length to their journey, contributing to traffic congestion at the civic centre and increasing emissions. This contravenes the BCP Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

The intention of the 2017 -2021 National Lottery Heritage Fund includes the aim of making it harder to drive through the Park. It does not state that it should 'prevent'

driving through the Park. The current traffic calming is not as effective as maybe it could be, but closing the Whitecliff entrance should not be used as a solution to themismanagement of this £2.5m fund.

My questions on the reason for, and the timing of, the trial include:

Why is the trial being undertaken in the winter months when the Park is less busy?

Why is the trial taking place out of school holiday times?

Why is the trial due to end just before the half term holidays? Isn't this a missed opportunity to test the trial and garner thoughts from users when the Park would be busier, therefore encouraging awareness of the gate closure?

Was the timing a deliberate decision to ensure lack of awareness of the trial, therefore excluding a group of people who may want to contribute to the consultation?

Has the trial been influenced by threatened legal action by Cycling UK?

Is the council using this trial to reach a compromise agreement with Cycling UK? Social media posts by some parties indicate that this is the case, despite BCP's replies that it is not.

BCP has thus far been unable to provide a satisfactory answer to many of these questions asked by various local people as far as I've seen.

BCP Council has failed to offer any other alternative solutions to solve the "rat run" problem that they claim is the issue. Why is full closure at one end the 'only' solution, when other ideas are not even being considered?

In conclusion my family feels that the trial has been conducted in a way that is, at the very least, undemocratic, and questionable in both its timing and purpose.

There is a risk that the consultation can be completed several times by one person and is therefore, open to abuse, and at risk of providing both incorrect and misleading data.

People without computer access are not able to easily access the consultation in paper form. Many do not use the library.

The Council have provided confusing and contradictory information on the announcement of the decision and the signage has also been poor. Contradictory dates have been given for the decision to be made and it is unclear how and by whom a decision will be reached.

The trial itself has divided the community and encouraged discord due to unprofessional management and mismanagement of information by BCP.

Please debate this issue fully and carefully. BCP Council stands to lose lots of respect and support from residents, and those hoping for votes as they stand for election may find supporting an unnecessary closure very costly politically.

Yours sincerely,

The [REDACTED] family, aged 93, 64, 46, 11, and all opposed to the closure.

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**Subject:** Closure of Poole Park Whitecliff Gate to through traffic

Dear Charter Trustee for Poole

As a trustee you are responsible for the civic, historic and ceremonial traditions of the former Borough of Poole as well as being a councillor of BCP.

I am therefore writing to you to notify my objection to the closure of the Poole Park Whitecliff Gate to through traffic.

BCP have stated that the reason for this closure is to promote environmental improvements in and around Poole Park and to prevent the use of the park as a through route between Poole Town Centre and Sandbanks Road / Whitecliff area. They have in various media spoken of this being a 'rat run'.

I believe the closure contravenes the original intent and spirit of the gift of the land by Lord Wimborne to the people of Poole. The original intention was that the Park should have a carriage route. At the time carriages were known as horse, horseless and motorised carriages. Therefore, this would have included cars.

The closure of the Whitecliff Road Gate has meant:

- cars now have to travel further from the Sandbanks and Whitecliff area to gain access to the Park with a longer return journey home
- an increase in pollution – both air quality and noise along the roads
- an increase in wear and tear on the road surfaces (which are already in a poor state)
- an increase in congestion on roads that are already heavily congested during much of the day
- an increase in the opportunities for accidents along the way and in particular at the entry to the Park by the Civic Centre
- that many vehicles now have to travel further within the confines of the Park as they need to turn around and leave by the one and only exit at Seldown, thus increasing the pollution in the Park
- a detriment to those who are disabled and may just want to take a peaceful drive through the Park without being stuck in traffic.

Please could you explain why the only option under consideration is that of closing the Whitecliff Road Gate. There are other options such as:

- closing the Park during the afternoon/evening rush-hour if this is perceived as a 'rat run' problem
- increasing the traffic calming measures within the Park to further slow down any through traffic.

Furthermore, I have concerns about the conduct of this 'trial' closure:

- the closure has come at a time of year when there is less use of the Park due to poor weather conditions and is therefore not fully representative

- no data has been provided to make comparisons between before and after closure
- no methodology or clarity has been provided regarding the survey data that is being collected
- there appears to be an opportunity for those from outside the area to simply supply a BH postcode to be considered as a valid entry
- it also appears possible that an individual could complete the survey several times
- the survey is therefore open to abuse and risks providing both incorrect and misleading data
- the trial was supposedly for a period until a decision had been made, initially advised by BCP as the end of February, but this appears to have been delayed until the May Cabinet meeting at the earliest
- BCP have stated that the Gate should remain closed until a decision has been made and this could be some considerable time away if there are delays in the process – the reasoning for this appears to be that the people of Poole could not cope with having the Gate opened again and then closed at a later date

I consider that the trial has been conducted in an undemocratic and questionable way. I would appreciate your comments and assurances on the honesty and integrity of the process and the validity of the results.

Finally, I would again state my objection to the closure of the Whitecliff Gate for through traffic in Poole Park.

Regards

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**Subject:** Poole Park's Whitecliff Entrance

Dear Councillors

Please find attached my considered opinion on BCP's proposed permanent closure of Poole Park's Whitecliff entrance.

Herewith my response to the consultation regarding the proposed permanent closure of the Whitecliff entrance to Pool Park.

There is so much wrong with this consultation it's hard to know where to start!

§ First of all, it's making a problem where none exists.

§ As it stands, the survey/consultation is totally open to abuse as no registration is required in order to complete it – unlike other surveys on the BCP website - and it is possible for one person to complete it multiple times. Also, there are no checks and balances to ensure outsiders are not completing it. The fact that this survey does not require registration when others on the website do, leads me to wonder if this has been done deliberately to encourage others from outside the BCP area to influence the result – such as Cycling UK perhaps?

§ At the weekend members of Cycling Rebellion were encouraging people from outside the BCP to complete the survey/consultation. The only people whose opinion should be taken into account are BCP residents, whose taxes pay for the upkeep of the park.

§ The survey/consultation highlights the access to the park but says nothing about the proposed closure leaving just one exit point – ie 50% of the current arrangement. It is deliberately misleading and disingenuous.

§ When I asked the question (of BCP), I was told the decision to hold the consultation had not been taken through any formal meeting process, such as Cabinet. This then seems to be happening at the behest of someone from BCP with their own personal agenda, wanting to keep their cycling buddies happy, rather than for the good of the community as a whole.

§ The survey/consultation should be invalidated as it is deliberately biased and poorly administered. § Why is the closure being trialled at the quietest time of the year? And why has the trial period not been timed to coincide with the school holidays when there would inevitably be more traffic?

§ A lot has been touted about safety yet there are no statistics for accidents involving cars within the park and you can't get safer than zero. The same cannot be said about the train that BCP installed after making it impossible for the previous operator – who had an exemplary safety record – to renew their licence. Another example of BCP getting wrong when they thought they knew better!

§ Whilst none of the accidents in the park have ever involved cars, there are reports showing accidents and injuries between bicycles and pedestrians.

§ There are, however, frequent accidents on the roads that would form the alternative route if Whitecliff gate were to be closed permanently. No less than 16 accident points have been recorded and increased traffic will only increase the number of accidents taking place, increase the resulting traffic jams and increase pollution. § The resulting traffic jams are going to affect the buses, which will have to be rescheduled and potentially affect the bus company's revenue.

§ The resulting traffic jams will delay taxis, making them late to collect/deliver their customers and as fares are charged according to time, the customers would be charged more and would not necessarily be able to afford to take a taxi so often, hitting the revenue of the drivers and taxi firms that employ them.

§ Even at this relatively quiet time of the year on the roads, there has been a massive knock-on effect to the surrounding roads and the approaches to them – Poole has been gridlocked! If this continues, people will stop coming into Poole – will the last one out please turn off the lights!

§ Trades people sitting in traffic jams lose money.

§ Another 'justification' is to reduce air pollution. Does the Council actually believe that when a vehicle exhaust emits pollution, that pollution stays exactly where it has been spat out into the atmosphere?!!! Anyone with any sense knows that wind and

air movement is going to move any pollution from the surrounding roads straight into the park. With more traffic forced onto the perimeter roads, there will be more pollution as cars sit in traffic jams for longer. Until you can guarantee an onshore wind 24/7, 365 days of the year, you are NOT going to decrease air pollution within the park, in fact the increase in stationary traffic is going to increase it!

§ Cars queuing to get out of the one remaining exit will also add to the pollution so that's the 'less pollution argument' a total non-starter too – again, you would actually be making it worse, not better.

§ The increased pollution would contravene the BCP Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. § BCP cannot prove/disprove the pollution issue without having recorded the pollution level within the park throughout the closure and comparing it with the figures over a corresponding period when the Whitecliff entrance is open. However, I have seen no such recording equipment so how is the so-called potential reduction in pollution going to be proven/justified?

§ The intention of the 2017 -2021 National Lottery Heritage Fund includes the aim of making it harder to drive through the Park. It does not state that it should 'prevent' driving through the Park. The current traffic calming is not as effective as it could be, and does not discourage so called 'rat running'. Closing the Whitecliff entrance should NOT be used as a solution to the mismanagement of the £2.5m Lottery Fund.

§ BCP has aligned itself with BH Active Travel and afforded them special access to the Council with regular meetings. This is unduly unfair as car drivers are not afforded the same access and the same opportunity to 'bend the Council's ear'. § BHAT exerts undue influence on the Council.

§ BHAT believes everyone should get on their bike. This is a ridiculous and unrealistic idea. Not everyone is physically capable of riding a bike, not everyone can afford a bike, not everyone has anywhere to store a bike and it is not practical to ride a bike all the time. Cars and bikes must co-exist and neither should take priority over the other.

§ BHAT is a toxic organisation that doesn't believe in free speech and blocks anyone that dares to disagree with them on their Facebook Group. They are not an organisation that should be allowed to have any influence over Council policy.

§ BHAT maintains that ALL their 1400 members agree with them regarding the closure. This is a lie as I know a number of people who belong to the group who don't agree with them – myself included. Just because they have 1400 members, doesn't mean they have 1400 votes in favour – because they haven't actually polled all of their members. Again, I know because I am a member of their Facebook group and I certainly haven't been asked.

§ Restricting access/egress will inevitably reduce the number of park users, which is not good for the businesses that operate from within the park.

§ Restricting access/egress will inevitably reduce the number of park users, which is not good for public health and wellbeing.

§ Closing the Whitecliff entrance will leave only one exit (Seldown) the approach to which is too narrow to allow traffic to flow easily in both directions. It is already difficult for vehicles to pass each other there, resulting in parked cars becoming damaged and cars scuffing their wheels on the kerbs. The only way to deal with this would be to alter the layout which would cost BCP money it doesn't have – as of January this year, BCP was showing a deficit of £60m! And if any money can be found, it should be spent on essential services, not to please the minority.

§ The increased traffic will make it impossible for cyclists and pedestrians to enter/leave the park via the Seldown entrance safely – contrary to the rationale for the scheme in the first place.

§ The proposed closure of the Whitecliff entrance, thereby denying motorists the opportunity to drive through serene and lush surroundings rather than between blocks of concrete, not only discriminates against the motorist, it discriminates against those who take the drive to de-stress for the good of their mental health – myself included.

§ Elderly and disabled people rely on being able to drive or be driven through the park as a form of recreation in its own right. It brings joy and pleasure to so many who are unable to walk or cycle. Preventing that is discrimination against that group of people.

§ The park was given to the people for the enjoyment/good of ALL, not just those able to fly through on their bicycles or those lucky enough to live close enough and be mobile enough to walk!

§ My late Father was a Bomber Command veteran who fought for this country's liberty. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the definition of liberty is: "the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behaviour, or political views". Poole Park was given to the people of Poole for the enjoyment/good of ALL – it is not acceptable to take away people's way of life for idealistic reasons that are neither realistic nor credible. It wasn't broken and didn't need fixing yet BCP has allowed itself to be unduly influenced by a body that does not represent all of the people.

§ We have already been here – with Keyhole Bridge – moving the closure a couple of hundred metres down the road is no different. Keyhole Bridge stayed open and so should Whitecliff.

§ The whole consultation is a total waste of time and resource. BCP's actions have, however, achieved two things: 1) You have succeeded in raising the underlying animosity between motorist and cyclist to fever pitch! 2) You have reminded the tax payer, as if any reminder was needed, that you don't have the interests of the community as a whole at heart. I respectfully suggest you would do well to remind yourselves that the tax payers in this community not only pay for the upkeep of the park, they pay your salaries and expenses. And with local elections looming, close attention is going to be paid to how this process goes!

I urge the Council to do the right thing for the entire community, not just the few. You have already spent £100Ks on installing cycle lanes across the BCP area, even though these don't benefit every resident. Unfettered access/egress to/from Poole Park IS for the benefit of the entire community. And as you have close ties to BHAT, I was going to say that you need to teach them that there is no problem that can't be fixed by cooperation between motorist and cyclist. However, there IS NO real problem (other than that in their heads) so nothing does actually need fixing!

13 February 2024

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**Subject:** Poole Park Entrance Closures

Dear Councillor

You will soon have a very important vote concerning access to Poole Park.

I am writing to you as a motorist, cyclist and pedestrian and a regular user of the Park.

I have never written to a local councillor before in my life. However I am doing so on this occasion because I feel particularly aggrieved about what appears to be the intended permanent closure of the entrances/exits to Poole Park, at Keyhole Bridge and Twemlow Avenue.

Please find my feedback together with, hopefully, some sensible suggestions, particularly regarding Keyhole Bridge.

A) Keyhole Bridge: This bridge has always been a safe and natural 'shared space' where road users give way to each other, they have to. There is no safety issue here whatsoever.

As a local resident for over 65 years, I am not aware of ANY injury accidents or collisions here (none have ever been reported in local media as far as I recall). There are many far more dangerous places in BCP that as a council you should be paying attention to.

If you really must do something at Keyhole Bridge, here are my suggestions:

Make the existing natural shared space clearer:

- 1) Create a different colour road surface.
- 2) Install clear 'shared space' signage on either side of the bridge.
- 3) Remove the unnecessary narrow piece of pavement beneath the bridge if you can.
- 4) Install a 'harsh' speed hump either side of the bridge.
- 5) Address the flooding issue that occurs every time there is heavy rain

B) Safety in the Park: What data do you have that proves that safety in the park is of concern with regard to vehicular access? The main risks to life and limb in the park are:

1) The council owned 'nobby train'. Two derailments now in a short space of time. Are you going to ban that too?

2) Riders of 'illegally' souped up electric bikes and scooters. Some of these CAN and DO travel at speeds in excess of 30 MPH including in the park. In reality motor vehicles generally do not travel at excessive speed in the park. That said you could slow all vehicular traffic further by making the current 'gentle' speed bumps 'harsher'. Also why not collect 'much needed' extra revenue with speed detection equipment?

C) Air Quality & Traffic Congestion on alternative routes: I don't need to explain this one. Nobody can deny the detrimental effect of pushing the extra traffic out onto often gridlocked surrounding roads, particularly during rush hour and in the summer and often made worse due to the constant rounds of road works.

D) Air Quality & Traffic Congestion within the park: With only one exit route from the park during busy periods and particularly in the summer, other school holidays and at weekends, queuing traffic waiting to exit onto Kingland Road, will become both a traffic hazard and will cause increased air pollution in the park..

D) Wildlife: The wildlife are fine, always have been always will be. Motorists stop to give way to wildlife crossing the road in the park all the time, they have to.

As a motorist I use the park regularly, up to 5 times a week. I am a carer for an elderly lady and gentleman (86 years and 92 years old), who enjoy their frequent visits to the park with me each week. We use the Keyhole Bridge entrance/exit as they live that side of Poole.

Please let's be sensible and stop this consent and unnecessary war against the motorist. Also, please stop pitting vehicle owners, cyclists and pedestrians against each other. It isn't broken so please stop trying to fix it.

All park users really can live alongside each other quite happily if you will let us. With respect, there are far more important things that as a council you should be focusing on.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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**Subject:** Leave Poole Park Alone Group Statement

**Statement and Purpose of the Leave Our Park Alone Group**

**Poole Park Whitecliff Gate closure Trial.**

## Background

The group was formed when the organising team became aware of the 4 week trial closure of the Whitecliff Gate in Poole Park. It quickly gained 1,300 members in its first week. The online membership consists of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians who regularly use the Park for its original purpose, as defined in the original gift of the land by the Wimborne Estate.

Due to the timing of the consultation, there appeared a lack of awareness of the trial closure. The

group mounted a demonstration at the closed gate to raise public awareness. In excess of 250

residents came to support the protest at short notice despite the uninviting weather. The representation was a mixture of BCP residents, including motorists, cyclists, walking group members,

parents with young children and the disabled and carers.

## Our Aim

To preserve the original spirit of inclusivity in the Park and retaining all access including to those

wishing to access the Park by vehicle. To ensure that it can be enjoyed in as many ways as possible

by all residents wishing to use it for both recreation and wellbeing.

## Statement

The group is opposed to and does not support the closure of the Whitecliff Gate. However, many of our supporters have felt the need for improved traffic calming measures that would make travelling by car through the Park of no time saving benefit to those who wish to use it for that purpose. In short, this would discourage so called 'rat runners'.

The closure contravenes the original intent and spirit of the gift of the land to the people of Poole. The original intention was that the Park should have a carriage route. At the time carriages were known as horse, horseless and motorised carriages. Therefore, this would have included cars. Despite the increase in cars using the road over the years no recorded serious incidents have occurred, as all Park visitors benefit from numerous speed restricting controls.

The closure does not achieve the whole aim of the **BCP Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, as it excludes those with busy and stressful lives who benefit from taking a gentle, calming, drive through the Park. It also excludes those who benefit from driving through the Park on route to their destination, allowing a short time to sit and enjoy the Park, or to allow their children a short time to play in the Park. Driving into and out of the Seldown entrance would be followed by a lengthy time sat in congestion at the Civic Centre. Many, or even most, residents have busy lives. Adding time restrictions to their use of the Park would make this untenable, and is therefore, unreasonable.

The current closure leaves only one Park exit to traffic. This restriction excludes the ability to leave the Park at the Whitecliff exit in cases where this would be their shortest route to their destination. Therefore, adding length to their journey, contributing to traffic congestion at the civic centre and increasing emissions. This contravenes the BCP Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

The intention of the **2017 -2021 National Lottery Heritage Fund** includes the aim of making it harder to drive through the Park. It does not state that it should 'prevent' driving through the Park. The current traffic calming is not as effective as it could be, and does not discourage so called 'rat running'. We do not believe that closing the Whitecliff entrance should be used as a solution to the mismanagement of this £2.5m fund.

**Questions and speculation on the reason for, and the timing of, the trial include:-**

Why is the trial being undertaken in the winter months when the Park is less busy?

Why is the trial taking place out of school holiday times?

Why is the trial due to end just before the half term holidays. A missed opportunity to test the trial when the Park would be busier, therefore encouraging awareness of the gate closure?

Was the timing a deliberate decision to ensure lack of awareness of the trial, therefore excluding a group of people who may want to contribute to the consultation?

Has the trial been influenced by threatened legal action by Cycling UK?

Is the council using this trial to reach a compromise agreement with Cycling UK? Social media posts by some parties indicate that this is the case, despite BCP's replies that it is not?

BCP has thus far been unable to provide a satisfactory answer to these questions.

BCP Council has failed to offer any other alternative solutions to solve the "rat run" problem that they claim is the issue. Why is full closure at one end the 'only' solution, when other ideas are not even being considered.

In conclusion we feel that the trial has been conducted in a way that is, at the very least, undemocratic, and questionable in both its timing and purpose.

There is a risk that the consultation can be completed several times by one person and is therefore, open to abuse, and at risk of providing both incorrect and misleading data.

People without access to IT are not able to easily access the consultation in paper form.

The Council have provided confusing and contradictory information on the announcement of the decision. Contradictory dates have been given for the decision to be made and it is unclear how and by whom a decision will be reached.

The trial itself has divided the community and encouraged discord due to unprofessional management and mismanagement of information by BCP.

The Leave Our Park Alone Group.

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**Subject: Poole Park Closure**

Good afternoon,

I would like to voice my objection to the current closure of one entrance to Poole park.

I live in the Canford Cliffs area and frequently visit Poole park, driving via the Keyhole Bridge and entering and exiting through the now closed entrance.

I now have to go on a longer journey there and back into the centre of Poole (if the entrance by the previous civic centre is closed), a much much longer journey causing congestion and more pollution on surrounding roads. This is discriminating against everyone that lives on the east and west of the park.

Previously there were 2 or 3 entrances (depending on the time of day) and 2 exits. Now there are 1 or 2 entrances (again depending on the time of day) but only 1 exit. It doesn't take much intelligence to work out that there are now significantly more cars exiting by the Dolphin swimming pool as it is the only way to out.

For example previously if there were (say) 100 cars going into the park, 50 may enter one or other of the entrances and exit the same way, then there would be (say) 50 journeys through each entrance. Now all those 100 cars must exit through one entrance and maybe enter though it as well, this means that there are now upto 200 journeys through the only open exit.

In fact in all the time I have spent in Poole park, there is more traffic than before the closure, walking in the park some cars make multiple trips past, I did count cars on the short walk from the fountain towards the Delphin swimming pool and in just 5 minutes 29 cars went past me.

Please see sense and re open the park, it is not reducing pollution, it is increasing it and it is not reducing possible accidents – this will not happen until BCP take action against e-scooters driving very fast across the pavements in the park inbetween walkers and children.

Many thanks

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**Subject:** Poole Park BH Active and the voice of the BCP Motorists

Hello

I have completed the consultation regarding vehicle access from Whitecliff into the Park. This proposal has caused me to look at the various cycling initiatives that the council has taken in recent times. I should declare an interest I am cyclist and I am pleased at many of the cycling infrastructure projects, where these don't impact on other users. I do oppose the Whitecliff entrance closure as I see this as another move against motorists. The park originally had five vehicle entrances, this reduced to three, then one became entry only and the entrances were closed until 10am. If you approach the Park from Sandbanks end and park you have to return back to Poole to exit the Park. This causes extra mileage and the resultant congestion in Poole and pollution.

I think the council has become anti motorist, again I declare on interest, I am a motorist. I understand that cycling group BH Active has quarterly meetings with the council officers to promote cycling, but it appears to me that there is no corresponding group to represent the views of motorists and as a result we seem to have a council that seems to be taking a partisan view, which appears to me to be anti motorist.

My understanding is that the Wallisdown cycle lanes cost the ratepayer over £2m, but is hardly used, by cyclists. Have the council any statistics on how much it has increased cycling on this route? I also note that the bus lay-bys have been removed, as a result buses stopping to allow passengers to alight or disembark, stop all the motor traffic. This change unnecessarily increases congestion and the resultant pollution. I understand that this may be at the bus company's request, to obviate the buses having to pull back into the traffic. If this is the case I would submit that motorists are very good at letting buses out, secondly if the council agreed to this then they did so at the detriment to the motorist, who is now held up unnecessarily. Given that the carriageway has been significantly reduced it must make it more difficult for emergency vehicles to pass as cars and especially large lorries struggle to make way.

I also see that the Whitelegg Way cycle path has very few users, again I would ask is there any statistics on the increase in cycling that this has brought about.

Both these schemes not only cost a great deal of money but caused increased congestion during their construction. I would like to see the statistics so I can know if the council got value for money and how much this cost per cycle mile.

I see that car parking charges are going up to a minimum of two hours? My understanding is that is one the basis of a level charging regime across BCP, if that is the case why not reduce all to 1 hour, or less, 30 mins. Again it looks like part of an anti motorist agenda.

I see that a cycle lock up shop has been established in the Dolphin Centre, how much did this cost the council tax payer and how much are the ongoing costs to the local authority?

Having read some of the social media on Poole Park I understand that the council will not necessarily abide by the view of the consultation outcome. The council has already stated that its view is that it wants the entrance closed, so these two statements make the consultation invalid, as the outcome is already known and people understand that taking part in the consultation is a nugatory exercise as their opinion counts for nothing. It is a little like having an election and ignoring its outcome, no one bothers to vote. Not very democratic.

I understand from BH active that there have been previous consultations regarding

this subject, but I am unaware of these could the results of these be made know to me?

I think we have over the years lost car parking in Poole Park, there was on street parking opposite the old Swan Lake, now lost, see photo. The disabled parking arrangements on the road take two spaces for every effective disabled space, see photo. I spoke to one disabled driver who said they would use them because of the configuration.

We lost hundreds of parking spaces on Poole Quay over the years, see photos. On street free parking has been steadily lost. This is whilst the old town multi storey car parks that supposedly replaced this are a disgrace. They are, dark, damp, smelly, frequented by beggars, drug users, lifts are often broken and closed in the evening. I do not feel safe in the day often, but certainly not in the evening, I am an Army veteran so not easily put off.

Last time I used the Quay car park I arrived just before 6pm and was double charged, once for the few minutes before 6 and again for the few minutes after 6. I was told the software can't cope with this situation!

I look forward to your response.