

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr M Howell – Mayor

Present: Cllr K Rampton (Sheriff), Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr J Clements, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr S Moore, Cllr Dr F Rice and Cllr C Weight

12. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Pete Miles;
Councillor John Beesley;
Councillor Peter Cooper;
Councillor Millie Earl;
Councillor Andy Hadley;
Councillor Emily Harmon;
Councillor Peter Sidaway;
Councillor Paul Slade;
Councillor Vikki Slade;
Councillor Oliver Walters.

13. Declarations of Interests

None.

14. Confirmation of Minutes and matters arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 29 January and 13 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

Voting: Unanimous.

15. Charter Mayor's Communications

The Mayor highlighted that this was to be the Honorary Clerk's final meeting of the Bournemouth Charter Trustees due to his impending retirement. Trustees thanked the Honorary Clerk for his many years of support.

The Mayor provided Trustees with an update on his activities since the previous meeting. The Mayor confirmed he had attended 22 events, including:

- A service for Operation Dynamo at the Old Lifeboat Station;
- A service for armed forces lost in the Falklands War;

- A Fun Run at Poole Grammar School;
- A Visit to care leavers and asylum seekers football team;
- The opening of an art exhibit at The Lighthouse;
- The Dorset Mela.

16. Report of the Poole Civic Working Group

The Sheriff and Chair of the Civic Working Group (CWG), Councillor Karen Rampton, presented the report of the CWG highlighting issues that the CWG had reviewed and any resultant recommendations.

It was confirmed that the CWG had been meeting regularly and would continue to meet on a monthly basis until ongoing issues are resolved.

Trustees were advised that the use of the robing room at the Guildhall was under review as part of the wider drafting of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which set out the provision of support from BCP Council to the Charter Trustees. As part of this review, the CWG was considering how many days the room would be required for annually and any corresponding fee, and how to dress the room using civic regalia. The Sheriff and Mayor would be conducting a review of suitable regalia items, including their storage, on Friday 25 June, and a further update to Trustees would follow.

At the request of the Sheriff, the Mayor introduced the proposed changes to Handbook which followed the previously approved revisions to the Standing Orders. While it was acknowledged that Trustees awaited the outcome of the Community Governance Review, proposed changes included refinements or additions to sections on the reimbursement of expenses; order of precedence and joint Mayor/Chairman attendance at events; and other matters of protocol. The proposed changes were recommended for approval.

The Mayor highlighted the more limited remit of the Charter Trustees and the prohibition on spending for matters outside of that remit. Under this remit, the Beating of the Sea Bounds event had been deemed acceptable, and a new event to reconfirm the land bounds was in the early stages of planning. The team was also reviewing a potential 'Sheriff's Day' event.

The CWG had instructed officers to update the Mayor and Sheriff Boards and to review the potential re-gilt of the Sheriff's wand and maces. Additionally, it was requested that officers investigate the purchase of a replica wearable Oar Mace, to be worn by the Mayor to signify that they were the Admiral of the Port.

The Mayor was working to compile a community database to be used to invite attendees to events. It was requested what if any Trustee had suggestions for inclusions they should contact the Mayor directly

The Mayor confirmed that he was working with the Council to expand Trustee social media channels as part to a wider communication strategy.

Trustees were supportive of the proposed changes to the Handbook though queried the document's use of the term 'Chairman'. When put to a vote, the majority of attendees voted that the CWG should use the term 'Chair' while the Handbook should mirror the term used by BCP Council for its Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the revisions to the Handbook be approved, subject to the inclusion of the correct term for the BCP Chairman.

Voting: Unanimous.

ACTION: Honorary Clerk to review the term used by BCP Council for its Chairman and to confirm to all Trustees.

Councillor Trent arrived 18:10.

17. Audit Report 2024-25

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services introduced the audit report, confirming that there were no matters of high priority identified. Where appropriate the audit team's recommendations had been accepted and actioned.

Regarding R9: Publication Scheme, there would be no publication of asset detail to the public website as publication could compromise the safety of the assets or anyone holding/wearing them. In addition, it was felt that the recommendation to publicly publish all instances of expenditure over £100 was impractical and too resource-intensive to support.

RESOLVED: That Trustees note the internal audit report and the management responses to the recommendations.

Voting: Unanimous.

18. Budget Outturn & AGAR Return 2024/25

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) introduced the report, highlighting that the Charter Trustees of Poole had underspent against their budget by £28,769 following receipt of legal advice and the subsequent reduced remit. The use of reserves to support the budget was therefore £38,500 rather than the budgeted £67,269, and total reserves carried forward were therefore £98,269 as at March 2025.

The AGAR, set out in Appendix B, was submitted for Trustee approval and progression to public inspection and audit.

It was recommended that Trustees approve the proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations to increase the £100 threshold for procuring 3 quotes, to allow for greater flexibility and reduce administrative time for officers in line with the audit recommendation.

Trustees queried what would happen to reserves held, should the Community Governance Review result in the abolishment of the Charter Trustees. In response, Trustees were advised that any reserves would be classified as an asset to be transferred to new statutory body(s).

Trustees were reminded that the Charter Trustees would only be abolished if every property currently covered by the Charter Trustees was parished, and if the Charter Trustee remained they would retain the money.

The Sheriff suggested that some of the reserves could be used to support the maintenance of the regalia. Trustees were mindful that the reserves was made up of taxpayer money and should be used appropriately.

At the request of the Sheriff the Deputy Head of Democratic Services provided an update on staff recruitment, confirming that the two currently vacant Macebearer posts had been filled by three new permanent members of staff, each working part-time hours.

RESOLVED: that Trustees

- 1. Note the Outturn position for 2024/25 set out in appendix A;**
- 2. Approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 found in appendix B; and**
- 3. Approve the change to the financial regulations to allow the requirement for a competitive review to be increased from £100 to £500 on purchases set out in paragraphs 9-10.**

Voting: Unanimous.

The meeting ended at 6.46 pm

MAYOR