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**Website - [http:// poolebeachhuts.co.uk](http://poolebeachhuts.co.uk)**

**Notes of Public Meeting held on 22.10.19 7pm St Aldhelms Church Hall.**

Question papers were circulated prior to commencement of the meeting.

**Present.**

**Committee Members** = Bob Lister (BL), Lyn Thomas, Jack Crewe, Julie Snow, Val Arbon, Janet Coy, Yvonne Hartwell.

**Committee Apologies.** None.

**57 members of the public signed the attendance register.**

The evening began with a welcome by the Chairman, Bob Lister, (BL) followed by **introductions of attending Speakers Jacqueline Wood (BCP Beach Hut Manager) (JW) Andrew Brown (BCP Operations Manager) (AB), Councillor Lewis Allison (BCP Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Facilities) (LA)**

**A short report was given by BL which included,**

- Thanks to members of the PBHA committee.
- Beach hut rent increases. 5% increase in 2020. Increase is the last in a planned annual rental increase over the past 5 years. Increased charge was a decision taken by the former Poole Local Authority. It was understood the current administration, BCP, could challenge the increase. This was thought unlikely. Possibly for 2021 though?
- Waiting list myths. Concerns re. large number of huts which remain empty. BCP keen to reduce waiting list.

BL then introduced Jacqueline Wood, Beach Hut Manager.

**Jacqueline Wood (Beach Hut Manager) JW** outlined her background (Leisure and Tourism). Beach Hut Manager started in her role last year, which is a new role for the Local Authority. Manages a small team of staff. JW felt that a good working relationship had been established with PBHA. Regular meetings etc. JW provides a point of contact for Beach Hut users. Covers Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole. JW will seek to streamline processes across both authorities, and take the best practice. JW currently focussed on

- aligning dates of the season across all 3 former authorities,
- aligning charges,
- improving the relinquishment process. 68 people relinquished huts in 2019. 525 offers made!
- Adjusting the process of short-lets, which allow people to let huts during summer months only. In future October and November will be the window for relinquishment of huts.
- JW stressed the importance of having up to date email addresses as a means of contact with Beach hut owners.

**Andrew Brown. (Operations Manager)** Major role, covers 11.5 miles of seafront. AB outlined his responsibilities and the challenges faced since Bmth, Christchurch and Poole have merged to one authority

since April 2019. There was much to streamline and review. Seafront Planning Documents from all 3 former authorities needed to be harmonised.

**Improvement Projects.** AB summarised a number of ongoing improvement projects,

- **Shore Road.** Renovations to toilets and some Beach huts. Should be finished by December 2019. Funded through Coastal Community Funding.
- **Canford Cliffs.** The stabilisation of the cliff was a major project. 7.4 million funds available. Work had gone out to tender but cost of work may exceed sum allocated. If this happens, project will need to be reviewed as no further funding available, and a re-tender would need to be made. It is hoped, if all goes well with the tender, that work would start Easter 2020. Some new huts are also planned to be built as part of this project, which is likely to take a year!
- **Branksome Chine.** Granite sets have been installed, adjoining shop & toilets as part of the `turning circle` for the land train. Survey work at the men's toilets have evidenced subsidence. More investigation work needed before decision on improvement work to toilets can begin. £45,000 available but this may not be sufficient to improve facility.
- **Sandbanks Pavilion.** This is `in the pipeline` for some development but needs a feasibility survey.

*Question raised. Could all residents, irrespective of where they lived in the BCP area, now rent a beach hut at any area along the beach? AB replied, not at the moment as the previous rules still applied for each of the former local authorities but this was an aspiration for the future.*

**Maintenance.** AB summarised the new approach to re-active and planned maintenance. AB emphasised the massive lack of investment in the seafront over the past. This had led to much of the allocated maintenance budget, over 70%, being spent purely on `re-active` maintenance. New staff, and changes to ways of working, had now led to significant improvements such that, in 2019, 70% of the maintenance budget was now being used for planned maintenance. This was a massive shift and much to celebrate. AB emphasised that much of the work being undertaken was being funded by external grants and funding bids. But they were creating a 5-year plan for regular maintenance.

*Question raised. Would the 36 wooden huts at Canford Cliffs be replaced with `like for like`? AB replied that the current decision was to maintain them but not replace.*

**Councillor Lewis Allison. Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Facilities.**

LA introduced himself. Appreciative that Beach hut tenants will want to see improvements in seafront facilities for the rental increases being made.

A number of questions were raised which LA and AB sought to answer.

- *Can people sleep in the 2 storey huts? No*
- *Why are luxury huts being built at Shore Road? To generate more income.*
- *Sand on the beach/promenade, why is it not being removed/raked? Reason =Coastal protection scheme demands that the level of the sand be raised over the whole bay. Retention of sand is key to protecting local residents homes. In addition, 2019 had seen many months of high winds which had blown large amounts of sand onto the prom.*
- *Beach cleansing teams. Concerns raised re. little evidence of the cleansing teams being in operation. AB assured those present that cleaning was undertaken.*
- *How do BCP intend to control cycling, scooter use etc on the promenade? AB explained that wardens had limited jurisdiction/control but would involve Police when necessary. Police not always able to make this a priority.*
- *Management of drones? AB explained this was a civil aviation matter.*
- *Life saving event, why was this not advertised and why was it situated at Branksome Dene, where it took up the whole beach area? BL and LT are attending a meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October re. arrangements and plans for Beach events in 2020. **This concern would be raised.***
- *When will BBQ signs be erected along Poole beach area? AB advised signs could only be advisory. New signage would be part of a bigger project.*

- Was it possible for consideration to be given to enable transfer of huts for people disabled and needing greater access to their huts? JW replied yes, transfer would be supported for those with medical conditions.
- Query raised about the rules around cars and service vehicles using the prom. Health and safety issues were seen at Branksome Dene Community room. Response = AB urged people to e.mail him or Jacqueline Wood on the day if need to raise concerns. **AB and JW Email details will be issued.**
- Can the cycle free period be extended beyond July and August to June and September? AB responded that this was complicated as involved consultation etc.
- How safe are the Canford Cliffs huts? AB advised that there is a regular survey of the cliff every 4 weeks. Minimal movement currently evidenced but, if any serious movement noted, then immediate action would be taken.
- There was an understanding that the `Sandfest` event in 2020 was to be an enlarged event. Following consultation this idea has now been abandoned. In addition, an earlier finishing time of 11pm had been partially agreed, which would reduce noise etc
- Parking charges. Could beach hut tenants be given reduced parking? **LA said he would raise it at BCP for possible consideration.** It was confirmed that no parking charges on Cliff Drive would happen.
- Concerns re. Travellers accessing Sandbanks car park. Could not the barrier be raised? Cllr. Advised that height barriers can prevent legitimate users from accessing car parks and that there were other complications with these that discouraged use.
- A rave at Branksome Chine had led to vandalism of a number of huts. Question was raised as to why the wardens had not spotted the damage, as many owners had discovered the damage themselves. Did the wardens regularly patrol/check on condition of huts? AB confirmed this was the expectation. BL advised that BCP needed to improve overall monitoring but appreciated cost of installing electricity for CCTV purposes. BL proposed that a solution could be solar lighting.

Cllr Mohan Iyengar Ward Councillor for Canford Cliffs joined in the discussions especially regarding travellers.

One member complained strongly that the condition of her hut at Sandbanks was disgraceful and felt paying the same rental as others was unfair.

BL brought the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed. 9.15pm.