

Autumn News 2024



Sailing away - blustery day at Shore Rad

Committee news and views

The committee met in September and October and a number of issues were discussed.

General neglect

While most members acknowledge the continuing financial pressures facing most local authorities, including BCP, with high demands on social services and education budgets, there is a strong feeling that beach hut tenants are contributing hugely to the general 'pot' but very little is being spent to maintain the seafront generally. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole is an area blessed with beautiful natural resources and its long seafront and beaches attract visitors from a wide area but the infrastructure is ageing and desperately needs more attention to benefit all its users.

There are continual issues with plumbing and pipe work which cannot not just be fixed by replacing a tap or clearing a blocked drain occasionally. Surely investment is needed to save precious water which we as regular beach users see being wasted on a daily basis.

Planted areas such as at Flaghead Chine must be looked after or their neglect just adds to an image of decline. It sadly no longer resembles the attractive installation shown in this picture below.



Shoddy workmanship

Some members who have had their huts painted recently have reported incidents where rotten wood is painted over, plaster repairs completed on two storey huts but never painted. We have even heard of dead flies painted over! Surely it is in the long term interest of our landlord, BCP Council, to provide a level of quality to maintenance work to prolong the life of its property.

Yet another disappointing summer this year, with just one week in September offering consistently good weather. How many tenants will be wondering if they can justify the ever-increasing rents on our much loved beach huts?

BCP is still facing a budget deficit so another 5% increase is inevitable in line with the five year plan devised by the previous administration. Cllr Millie Earl, our previous portfolio holder, is now Leader of the Council following the general election in May when Cllr Vikki Slade, the former leader was elected as MP for Mid-Dorset and Poole North.

Please come and meet our new portfolio holder Cllr Richard Herrett at our Autumn meeting in November where we will be raising the subject of our rents and other issues.

Keep up to date at www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk

Bob Lister, Chairman

tel: 07980 928752 or email bob@sunwiser.co.uk

Beach staff

With fewer beach-front staff than ever this year, most Poole beaches no longer have a seasonal 'ranger' at each beach station to contact in case of incidents. In many ways it was fortunate that there appeared to be a much reduced number of visitors this year with daily car parking charges no doubt making it prohibitive for many families to visit. However, members reported that some individual staff members have been very proactive and helpful in their duties.

Fees 2025

The five year beach hut pricing structure which was accepted into the 2023 council budget by the previous Conservative administration will no doubt be scrutinised again this year.

Last year at our Autumn meeting we had reassurance that improvements would be made to staffing levels but this has not materialised. Members will again be seeking assurances that tenants' genuine concerns are heeded.

Lifesaving events - Branksome Dene Chine



The events are hugely popular but consideration should be given to other beach users at the busiest time of the year including wedding parties booked at the Community Room.

BCP need to address these issues by imposing restrictions on the organisation before accepting another event in the future.



Rockwater Sandbanks



Although there appears to be no progress currently on the construction site, reports in the Daily Echo suggest that 150 jobs are being created at Rockwater's 'flagship' third restaurant which is due to open next spring.

The new venue will have infrastructure to produce bread, pastries and sauces for both Poole based restaurants. The venue will be spread over two floors with an outdoor terrace.



An interview with Councillor Richard Herrett, BCP portfolio holder for seafront and tourism

I met with Richard in October and we chatted about his background and current role. Richard was brought up in Lincolnshire and moved to Bournemouth, his wife's home town, nine years ago. His professional background is in hospitality having worked as general manager in several businesses in the BCP area and food and beverage manager for the National Trust at Knoll Beach. However he took a degree in politics and kept a keen interest in local government, standing for election in May 2023. With his understanding of the issues and complexities of hospitality he feels his portfolio perfectly fits his professional experience and he loves the role he's in.



I asked if the revised Seafront Strategy has now been adopted. He replied: "It was passed by Cabinet in July. The previous strategy drawn up by the former administration was commercially driven but we've taken the view to be more balanced on the natural environment and areas impacted by climate change. Commercial interests have a place but not to the detriment of our unique coastline."

We spoke about budget worries ... Richard used the analogy "We're out of intensive care but we're still in the hospital. The SEND (Special Educational Needs) deficit will be £110 million by the end of the year so the pressures are enormous. There is a spend freeze on non-essential things and if we don't balance the books then government intervention could follow where a lot more would be under threat."

I asked about projects which could potentially be at risk, for example commitment to the Blue Flag scheme. He said: "Discussions are taking place with a number of potential sponsors for a range of events and schemes which might require partnership agreements."

We also spoke about the recent cliff slide at Durley Chine which involved a number of beach huts being displaced. Richard explained that the South West Flood and Coastal Team (SWFCT) have extended a cordon around the affected area and are making visual checks and surveys of high risk spots. "Sadly with so many extreme weather events we've experienced this year and with the ground saturated, landslips are a risk due to the landscape."



Interestingly, Richard explained that the SWFCT are 'in-house' and their services are in demand by other authorities which generates much needed income for BCP.

He also added that there is a Spend to Save programme which departments, including the seafront, can benefit from especially where commercial benefits can be felt.

Finally, Richard said he is happy to attend the Autumn meeting to hear our members views and answer questions.

Julie Snow

We still have a vacancy on our committee for a minute secretary. If you have the relevant skills please consider joining our committee.

We meet every couple of months and our aim is to represent our members and to raise issues of concern to BCP officers/members as appropriate and to keep members informed of council and committee news with our quarterly newsletters.

Our AGM will be held in the spring, date to be announced, when committee appointments are confirmed.

We'd love to have you on board!



Autumn Forum Meeting

A meeting of PBHA members is booked for **12th November at St Aldhelm's Church Hall, Lindsay Road 7 to 9pm** so please save the date.

Our new portfolio holders Cllr Richard Herrett and Cllr Mike Cox have kindly accepted our invitation to attend along with senior ranger, Adam Barnes. They will give us an update on the current situation with BCP and answer your questions.

We feel it is imperative that our association members, who are all stakeholders in the seafront community, have an opportunity to share their opinions and ask questions of the decision makers so we hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Please allow sufficient time to find a parking space

Improving communications

It is important that any changes to members' email addresses must be notified to our treasurer Tony Mullins - tmullins196@gmail.com or important news could be missed. Any new members need to supply emails in order to be added to our mailing list and keep regularly informed of all PBHA actions and updates.

A reminder from our Treasurer

Tony Mullins, our treasurer, has asked for those members who have not yet renewed their annual subscriptions to kindly pay £5 by bank transfer to Lloyds Bank - Sort Code: 775024 Account: 32480860.

In addition, please contact Tony at tmullins196@gmail.com with your name, address and hut number and if necessary to arrange a cheque payment.

Your continued support will ensure the association's ability to support and inform members on matters relating to your beach hut tenancy.

For more information about the Association visit www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk or contact

Chairman, Bob Lister 07980 928 752 or email bob@sunwiser.co.uk

