



JUMPERS AND ST CATHERINE'S HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

www.wcresidents.co.uk

Virtual Closed AGM

Weds 7th April 2021 20.50hrs

In these minutes: BCP=Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Unitary Authority; CTC = Christchurch Town Council; RA=Residents Association; SSSI=Site of Special Scientific Interest (Town Common and St Catherine's Hill for example)

- **Present:** Sue Fotheringham. Eileen Lancaster, Tara Fox. Liz Oliver. Malcolm Green.
- **Apologies for absence:** Maureen Biggin,
- **Chairpersons Report:**



A very belated but very sincere happy and prosperous

New Year to all our members and other readers

This report has been a particularly difficult report to write following the passing of Jim Biggin, our previous Chairman of 16yrs.

The committee continues to be run by volunteers and I must thank them for their support and commitment to keep the Residents Association in existence during another difficult year. With the restrictions and a change in officers on the committee, we none the less remain in a sound financial condition. Our annual accounts have been available on The Association website. The Association will endeavour to continue to provide information and address any issues that are possible to address whilst representing our members.

Keeping in Touch

The monthly circulation of our e-newsletter continues to provoke responses from members, and it's hoped that we can expand / broaden the content and continue to engage in dialogue with you as members.

Unfortunately, we still have around 400 households that don't take the e-mail news and due to covid restrictions, we were unable to deliver a paper newsletter. The government road map to lifting restrictions will hopefully see a way for us to re establish the contact with our members face to face. My thanks go out again to all those that supported myself as membership secretary in collecting subscriptions and delivering Newsletters. Those of you who are still willing to volunteer in collecting subscriptions or delivering newsletters (this will be in 2022 if restrictions are lifted allowing this), please let me know through the following email address : sue.fotheringham@yahoo.com

Role of the Residents Association

The Unitary authority of Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Council is in it's third year, along with the new Christchurch Town Council. I was very fortunate to have been elected to The Town Council and I wish to thank any members that gave me a vote. As an independent, I hope to continue to be part of a Town Council that has a strong sense of commitment/protection to Christchurch and its special unique characteristics. As the chairperson, Treasurer, and membership secretary of The Residents Association I very much hope to continue to report to you and bring maximum benefit to the residents of West Christchurch

Thank you to all our members

Sue Fotheringham

Jumpers and St Catherine's Hill Residents Association

Accounts Summary For Year Ending 31st December 2020

Income

As a direct result of Coronavirus our collectors were unable to collect the annual subscriptions this year. Many of the Members paid their monies directly into the Bank. Therefore, subscriptions are much lower, but donations have increased substantially. This has resulted in an increase in income of approximately £170.00 over last year.

Expenditure

Once again as direct result of the epidemic, newsletters were unable to be delivered by hand and regular committee meetings were held virtually. The only increase in expenditure this year was the introduction of the Garden Decoration Competition. Expenses therefore are approximately £ 1340.00 below those of last year.

Current Financial Position

As a result of the items mentioned above the net assets of the Association increased by £ 956.00 during the year and the fighting fund now stands at £8614.00

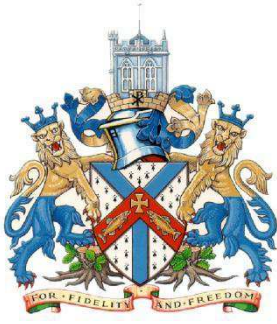
Subscriptions

The Association remains in a good position to providing the service to West Christchurch residents. Resulting from the unusual circumstances, the committee voted on retaining the subscription at £1.00. Collection of memberships continues to be restricted due to the current Covid restrictions but the option to join, support and benefit from a resident's association remains possible. Non-contact delivery to 83 Hillside

Drive, St Catherine's Hill, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2SZ or please see below the bank transfer option using the "business option during this process"

To pay by inter-bank transfer send your contribution to account: Jumpers & St Catherine's Hill Residents Association, account number 92732106, sort code 40-13-07 Don't forget to use your address as a reference

- Resignations: Sue Spittle mutually agreed to resign from the treasurer's post. The association are grateful for the work she did in her short time on the committee.
- Sadly due to ill health, our Chairman Jim Biggin resigned from the committee and although we thanked him at the time for his efforts over the many years as Chairman and treasurer, we would like to include a special note of thanks following his passing away in January.
- **Election of Officers:** Resulting from the unusual circumstances the committee voted on the following:
 - Sue Fotheringham appointed as Chairman and Treasurer.
 - Liz Oliver appointed as a committee member
 - All other current officers agreed to stand again in their current roles and were appointed to the committee.
- Appointment of delegates area of interest
 - Eileen Lancaster – Bournemouth International Airport, Hall on The Hill
 - Malcolm Green – Planning
 - Sue Fotheringham – Planning, CTC, BCP, FSCH, Town Common Steering Group.
 - Tara Fox - Newsletter Editor
 - Maureen Biggin - Committee member
 - **Letter from Mr. Daniel Lucas Town Clerk Christchurch Town Council, attached.**
 - Meeting closed 21.35 hrs Next meeting 12th May 2021 19.00hrs



Christchurch Town Council

Old Town Hall
30 High Street
Christchurch
BH23 1AY

FAO: Jumpers and St Catherine's Hill
Residents' Association

Date: 24 February 2021
Contact: Daniel Lucas
Ref:
Phone: 01202 022 479
Email: townclerk@christchurch-tc.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Fotheringham,

Re: Article for JSCHRA Annual General Meeting

Thank you for inviting me to provide an article for your forthcoming AGM. There is indeed much to discuss and highlight at the Town Council and I welcome the kind opportunity to share with your association and members those achievements. Of course, these thoughts are my own personal thoughts and are not those of the Council.

I propose to set out the following:

- 1) Local Government and Local Council Context;
- 2) Work done since creation of the Town Council;
- 3) Work in progress;
- 4) Future goals and aspirations;
- 5) Challenges to date.

Local Government and Local Council Context

Following Local Government Reorganisation ("LGR") across Dorset in 2019 and the dissolution of x8 Borough/District Councils and 1 County Council we are now working within a unique local government context. BCP Council as a Unitary Council covers a vast area and delivers the statutory services as expected: Social Care Services, Housing, Regulatory Services (Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Building Control etc), Highways and so on.

Ordinarily parish and town councils (known as "local councils") operate in a 3-tier system: local councils, borough/district councils and the county council. For the BCP area this is not the case given the dissolution of all boroughs. We are therefore in a situation where the local council can directly engage with those policies and plans which impact directly upon Christchurch residents in a two-way rather than three-way conversation. The town council, here, provides the missing voice for Christchurch residents.

Without local council provision in a Unitary area there are arguments to say that residents face what is commonly known as “democratic deficit”. This is all the more evident when that Unitary Council is also one of the largest in terms of its geographic scope, as BCP is. To this end, we only have to look to our neighbouring Unitary Councils: Southampton, Portsmouth, Wiltshire and see that in terms of their size and scope they are much smaller. I am of the strong personal opinion that ensuring Christchurch has a large voice in a larger Unitary area is crucial to the development and vitality of this Town.

Arguments “for” or “against” local councils aside, we are where we are. To understand the operation of the Town Council it will serve to provide some context to the local council landscape. Christchurch Town Council operates with one of the lowest precepts when we look at similar size comparators: Ringwood, New Milton, Wimborne, Weymouth etc...I have included a table below to illustrate the position (2020-2021):

Authority	Amount Precepted	Ctax Base	Band D Ctax
Dorchester	1,503,515	7,646.2	196.64
New Milton	1,130,212	10,531.3	107.32
Ferndown	794,762	7,490.2	106.11
Wimborne	413,450	3,059.5	135.14
Weymouth	3,355,030	18,067.9	185.69
Christchurch	514,417	12,184	42.22

As can be seen Christchurch has one of the largest council tax bases (the number of properties listed at Band D average ctax) but yet by a very large margin the lowest annual cost to a Band D resident. Importantly it must be noted that Weymouth Town Council was created at the same as Christchurch but has one of the highest precepts.

It is crucial to understand the local government/local council context when assessing what has been achieved in the two years since creation.

Work Done Since Creation of Town Council

I think the best way to highlight those achievements in the two years is to simply list what has been delivered. This way it can provide a quick “snap-shot” of the process. This shall be chronological so those items at the top are the items completed and put into place since day one, with those nearer the bottom being more recent achievements.

Installation of governance (Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Policies¹)

Registration with Information Commissioner and Publication Scheme

Risk Management Strategy/Insurance provision

Banking and Banking Mandate, including E-Banking

Treasury Management Strategy

Creation of Committee and delegation to the same (Terms of Reference and Elections)

Office of the Mayor and Civic functions (Civic Day, Remembrance, charity events)

Maintaining twin-town links with: Aalen, St.Lo, Christchurch NZ, and Tatabanya

Provision for internal/external audit

Website delivery

Councillor and Member training in terms of Standards and Code of Conduct and Planning

Management of x3 Allotment sites (invoicing, tenancy agreements, complaints)

Management of principal open spaces (Christchurch Quay, Mudeford Rec', Druitt Gardens, all tree/vandalism/open space management)

Landlord Management for community facilities (Druitt Hall, Mudeford Rec' Pavilion, Tuttons Well Guide Hut)

2019 Events calendar delivered successfully² (Christchurch Food Festival, Stompin' on the Quomps)

Listed Building maintenance and oversight (Old Town Hall Mayor's Parlour, delivery of the replacement cupola at the Town Hall)

"Day-job" responses to planning and licensing applications

Working Group recruitment from community volunteers (Neighbourhood Plan and Community Grants)

Community Grants Scheme delivered³ and successful

Strategic Plan put into place

Application for the retention of the Green Flag award for Christchurch Quay and awarded

Creation of Social Media policy and accounts: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Delivering co-option (remotely) for a new Councillor following an untimely passing of a Member

Installing rapid virtual meeting processes in response to Covid-19 and streaming via Zoom to Facebook

¹ Health and Safety, Grievance, Training Policy, Community Grants, etc..

² Including liaising with Police, Fire Authorities and the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) and drafting of legal licenses

³ x2 tranches during the Civic Year with £30k awarded to multiple charities and organisations.

Covid-19 Useful contacts created

Neighbourhood Plan project⁴

Community Infrastructure Levy being collected.

Of course, there are probably matters which I have left off, for example Britain in Bloom entry was being planned for early 2020 which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the pandemic; however, I have included those items which illustrate the length and breadth of the Town Council's duties.

Work in Progress

Climate Change

The Town Council has recently created a Task and Finish Group to look at the climate emergency and to report back to Full Council with policy objectives which can provide some concrete plans and projects to get to grips with. For example, this may include more tree-planting initiatives, carbon diaries and looking to be a carbon neutral council, influencing strategic policy of BCP Council, policy targets and goals in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and so on. Ultimately it shall be for elected councillors to direct the vision here.

Neighbourhood Plan

This project is a massive gain for the town. The Localism Act 2011 gives this power to Town/Parish Councils/Forums to create a Neighbourhood Plan. This means the town and its communities, residents, visitors and so on can truly shape a planning document which looks to deliver sustainable development for the town. This plan then, as a matter of law, **must** be considered by BCP Planning Officers when making decisions about Christchurch Planning applications. This power also allows for more Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") monies to flow back into Christchurch. Without a Neighbourhood Plan the Town (via the Town Council) only receives 15% of the CIL levy collected from development in the area, with a Neighbourhood Plan this increases to 25%⁵.

The Neighbourhood Planning process is a first for Christchurch and I cannot expound the benefits enough of ensuring that residents really do play an active part in this process. It simply is not enough to say "*they never listen to us*" when the mechanisms and machinery are put into place to listen and have an effective 2-way conversation. I include below the links to the Town Council Neighbourhood Plan website and survey which is live⁶ until the 15th of March.

⁴ Including creation and interviewing of volunteers for the Working Group, Appointment of a consultant and design of survey and advertisements etc.. second website created

⁵ The legislation is detailed but this provides a cursory analysis.

⁶ The survey is a "scoping survey" to see what type of plan the town and its community wants. Ranging from design of new homes, through to employment policies, housing and housing allocation policies, retail,

<https://www.christchurchplan.uk/>

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CNP-Survey1>

Employment of More Staff

The Town Council has budgeted for another member of staff. Currently we only have x2FTE officers. Myself as Town Clerk and 0.5FTE Mayor's Secretary and 0.5FTE Administration Officer. Unfortunately, the pandemic made it difficult to advertise and recruit as the sector is extremely niche. However, we are to recruit in the next financial year one more Officer as the workload grows with the increasing plans and projects councillors have in mind.

Facilities Management

The Town Council has suffered spates of vandalism at Mudeford Recreation Ground Cricket Pavilion so we can see 'target-hardening' of this site in the future in terms of roller-shutters, possibly CCTV, and general maintenance⁷. Moreover, the Old Town Hall roof requires work and attention. As a statutorily listed building this indeed is priority and the project shall probably run into the hundreds of thousands, rather than the tens of thousands. This is all subject to survey, a fair tender/procurement process and the necessary design of the project and all that comes with a major architectural programme of works⁸. Finally, Druitt Hall needs further attention as the tenants have asked for window replacement and a survey has recently been instructed.

Britain in Bloom/Christmas Lighting

We have again missed crucial months in preparing for Britain in Bloom due to the lockdown, so councillors have re-tasked that money to Christmas lights for the forthcoming advent period. I am currently engaging with BCP Officers in the street lighting department to hopefully boost the basic BCP offering for this year with our re-tasked budget. I would like to think that we can aim to deliver Britain in Bloom next year⁹

Quality Council Status

I have recently completed the required qualification for Town Council clerks (CiLCA Certificate in Local Council Administration) in my own time and was a finalist in the annual Clerk of the Year award¹⁰. This means the Town Council is now available in law to exercise the "general power of competence"; *and* in employing a clerk who holds this qualification this opens the Council up to be assessed for the "Quality Council"

conservation and heritage and environmental policies. These can all be captured by a Neighbourhood Plan as well as others.

⁷ Subject to councillor approval of the principle and expenditure.

⁸ As above.

⁹ As above.

¹⁰ Delivered by the National Association of Local Councils ("NALC") with approximately 9,000 parish and town councils across the UK.

scheme. I would like to think that councillors would be willing to apply and seek the foundation quality council status¹¹.

Future Goals and Aspirations

The Council's Strategic Plan identifies those areas it wishes to concentrate upon. For sake of convenience these are:

- Improving the street-scene,
- Concentrating upon highways matters (alleviation of congestion in the town especially Fountain Court roundabout, promotion of alternative forms of transport other than car etc..),
- Striving to increase the promotion of democracy through encouragement of opportunity, transparency, links to associations and sports groups; and
- Management of the environment.

I have included the Strategic Plan and its vision. Hopefully, this explains the Council's priorities up until 2025. This is a short and accessible document with some concrete objectives to really concentrate upon.

Challenges to Date

The key challenge has been operating with an extremely low precept from day one. However, plans are in place to hopefully deliver an extra member of staff so that the growing portfolio of projects can be delivered. The pandemic admittedly frustrated some of our goals in this regard (Britain in Bloom, recruitment) but through re-tasking budgets to provide swift responses (for example increasing the Community Grant budget in response to the pandemic, and re-tasking some funds towards Christmas lights) we have been able to adapt to emerging situations accordingly.

Other challenges have been the unforeseen problems with the Old Town Hall roof and ensuring the Council is in a good financial position to preserve this listed heritage asset for the community; as well as a spate of vandalism at Mudeford Pavilion. This is only the second full year of the existence of this Town Council, one year of which has been thwarted by the pandemic; but, I am extremely proud of my councillors in driving forwards initiatives I look forward to working upon for the wider public interest.

I hope this helps provide a candid update for your members. It is a shame I cannot come across and answer your questions, or indeed present virtually in a meeting to you; but I trust this highlights those areas we have excelled at, as well as those where we have performed not so well.

¹¹ Subject to councillor decision and mandate.

May I thank you for your time and trust this shall be used solely for the officers of the JSCHRA when they come to present their AGM to their members. Once we are able to I look forward to meeting the Association and perhaps a Q and A session.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Daniel Lucas'.

Daniel Lucas LLb(Hons). DipLaw.

Town Clerk

Christchurch Town Council