

**Poole Beach Huts Association Annual General Meeting
4 March 2015**



Minutes

Chairman Bob Lister welcomed members and thanked guests including speaker, Bruce Grant-Braham, Chairman of Poole Tourism Partnership for attending the Association's third Annual General Meeting.

BL also thanked committee members for their help last year in making the Association a success and thanked Martin Stevens, Treasurer, for providing the venue for the AGM and members who provided refreshments.

BL introduced the committee members and welcomed Borough of Poole officers, Anthony Rogers, Recreation Manager and Judith Martin from the Beach Office. He also thanked the team for their continued hard work in relation to the clear condition of the prom during the winter from blown sand, the much improved management of the Sand Polo event and the great success of the recent sand replenishment scheme.

The formal AGM was led by Jack Crewe, Secretary. Committee roles were appointed for the ensuing year and a list appears after the minutes.

MS reported that there was currently £2000 in the accounts. Members who had not paid their fees were reminded to do so.

BL introduced Bruce Grant-Braham who gave members a summary of the work of Poole Tourism and stressed the importance of tourism to the financial well-being of the town. The hospitality sector is a significant employer and visitors' spending generates additional income for those in ancillary employment in the town. The high standard of the beaches and the appeal of Sandbanks as a renowned destination are of huge importance in the promotion and marketing of Poole. He praised the work of the beaches team in maintaining the seafront and the high quality of the recent replenishment scheme. He acknowledged that some commercial investment is needed in order to provide additional improvements but felt caution is needed in terms of jeopardising the natural beauty of Poole's coastline which is its main appeal.

Mr Grant-Braham explained that further Council cuts would see the regrettable closure of Poole Welcome Centre with Tourism staff moving to Poole Museum to provide a tourist information service.

He also explained that advertising in the Poole Guide, which has been produced annually since before the 1960s, generates income for the promotional work of the department and allows 'tourism partners' to participate in promotions and feature their advertising material in the Welcome Centre. The programme of successful events organised by the Tourism team are funded by the continual support of local sponsors including Wave FM, Coles Miller and Sibbett, Gregory.

BG-B informed that his long-standing role as Chairman of Poole Tourism Partnership is a voluntary position, he is not employed by the Council nor is he an elected member. He explained that work will soon begin on the next Tourism Strategy as the current strategy finishes this year.

Finally he welcomed news that Condor Ferries will be starting their new service to Poole on 27 March.

BL thanked BG-B for his interesting and enlightening talk.

Questions from the floor included a reference to the delay in the completion of the retail occupancy of Dolphin Quays and the inadequate bus service to Sandbanks in the winter months.

BG-B expressed his disappointment in the Dolphin Quays project and said that an item would be included in the next Tourism Strategy to help address its under occupancy.

He added that beach bus services out of season are financially unviable but sustainable transport solutions are important to reduce car use. Negotiations with the bus company are on-going.

BL then introduced Anthony Rogers, Borough of Poole Recreation Manager who gave an update of the Council's projects affecting the beaches.

- The sand replenishment scheme had been a great success. Last year's storms had eroded 10 years sand but the the recent replenishment had cost £2 million.
- There are currently 63 new beach huts under construction.
- Toilets at Flaghead are being replaced with the addition of a new accessible toilet which will be open for general use at all times.
- The team are currently exploring the feasibility of more huts as demand is still strong with over 1200 names on the waiting list. Turnover averages 100 per year.
- 65 short term huts generate £135K annually. These are likely to be reduced further to 55.
- CCTV installation is due to start this month but it is a corporate contract with many technical issues. It is hoped to be completed by May.
- Toilets at Shore Road are due for more refurbishment but need to be replaced as part of the Sustaining Poole's Seafront (SPS) plans.
- A new additional toilet has been installed at Branksome prom [check] and Branksome Chine toilets are being refurbished.

AR reported that in a recent survey, there was 92% satisfaction with the beaches.

Comments/questions from the floor included ...

Q. At Branksome Dene toilet provision is inadequate with two ladies units and disabled one locked. With functions at the Community Room as well as beach use it is unsatisfactory.

A. AR agreed and said the team would look at it.

Q. Request for extra toilet provision at Sandbanks during peak weeks when coach parties result in long queues.

A. Will look at levels with beach team.

Q. Lighting along the prom from Canford Cliffs to Bournemouth inadequate.

A. Provision needs a review but there is no electricity supply along the prom and installation would be very expensive. They have trialled solar panels but new sub stations can only be funded with commercial development.

Q. JC asked if the PBHA's proposal re shared tenancies had progressed.

A. All tenants have a licensing agreement and the the terms of the agreements are being looked at including the possibility of exchanges, twelve month payments and shared tenancies will be considered.

Q. Any plans to limit cycling?

A. The prom is a joint use location but the CCTV cameras will help with the problem of speeding cyclists. At the Branksome pinch point there may be a need to install additional measures eg chicanes or rumble strips. It is possible to enforce a local bye-law where there is evidence of infringement.

Q. Has planning permission been obtained for building new huts above 85-90 Sandbanks.

A. Planning application is in for building new huts west of the beach office.

Q. Increase in rent is unacceptable and will eventually jeopardise the benefits to the Council.

A. Rents raise £1.4 million per year. Costs of running the beach operation are £400K so there is a net contribution to the cost of running statutory Council services eg vulnerable children, adoption services, elderly care etc. Council tax has been frozen for another year meanwhile Government imposes additional costs to the authority and Poole is one of the poorest funded authorities in the country. While there is demand for beach huts members will seek to raise revenue where they can to balance the budget.

Q. Why have some people obtained huts very quickly, evidence suggests that some have received offers within months of being on the list.

A. The offers always go to the top of the waiting list first and then work down, it can be a lengthy process but those with specific location request wait the longest, those who are flexible may receive an early offer. Two refused offers result in applicants being removed from the list although they can re-apply.

Q. Proposal for redevelopment at Shore Road as seen at recent BoP public meeting indicates a 5 storey development, which would be over development in that location.

A. Just a proposal within the SPS at present to incorporate new toilets but subject to consultation.

BL thanked guests and members for attending and declared the meeting closed.

51 members attended the AGM

Committee members for 2015

Chairman: Bob Lister

Vice Chair: Lyn Thomas

Treasurer: Martin Stevens

Secretary: Jack Crewe

Newsletter Editor: Julie Snow

Social Secretary: Yvonne Hartwell

Ordinary members: Janet Coy, Cheryl Atterton