

# Beaulieu Parish Council

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## 2023/24 Annual Review

This Annual Review is being published ahead of the BPC's combined Annual & Parish Meeting to be held on **Thursday 16 May 2024 at 6.00pm**. All parishioners are most welcome to this event which reviews council activity for last year and confirms the council arrangements for the coming year.

The BPC is focused in serving our community, in improving the quality of life within the parish, listening to and aiming to address parishioners' needs and concerns together with encouraging an inclusive and vibrant community. The parish council also acts as a statutory consultee for local planning matters.

Every 4 years on the first Thursday in May parish councils conduct an election. As a result, all Beaulieu Parish councillors stood down on 4 May 2023. All councillors were re-elected unopposed and were able to continue to serve the community until the next election in 2027. Following Elaine Schofield's resignation after election in May 2023, we ran a casual vacancy process and in December 2023 welcomed Cllr. Kasia Lewis onto the Parish Council. In March 2024 Mark Grindrod resigned and Patrick Fairweather has also informed the council that he shall be standing down at the Annual Meeting. We will therefore be running a process in the coming months to fill two casual vacancies. Anyone interested in becoming a parish councillor should please contact the Council Chair ([nickhubbard.bpc@gmail.com](mailto:nickhubbard.bpc@gmail.com)) or the Clerk ([nicky.deering12@gmail.com](mailto:nicky.deering12@gmail.com)).

Council is currently made up of:

- Cllr. Mike Dolbear
- Cllr. Patrick Fairweather (Vice Chair)
- Cllr. Nick Hubbard (Chair)
- Cllr. Charlie Knight
- Cllr. Kasia Lewis
- Cllr. Sami Reece
- Cllr. Sara Steele
- Clerk to the Council: Mrs Nicky Deering

The Council is supported in its work by Cllr. Keith Mans (our HCC Councillor) and Cllr. Dan Poole (our NFDC Councillor following the May 2023 local elections). Prior to Cllr. Poole's election we were supported by Cllr. Michael Harris.

The Council expressed its thanks to both Mark Grindrod and Elaine Schofield for their contribution and dedication to the work of the Parish Council and also to Cllr Harris for many years of support.

The BPC's responsibilities cover a wide range of activities, much of which is managed through the following committees:

- Planning Committee (currently chaired by Cllr. Steele)
- Asset Management Committee (chaired by Cllr. Grindrod up to his resignation)
- Finance & General Purposes Committee (currently chaired by Cllr. Fairweather)

All recreation equipment in the Beaulieu Playground and Playing Field is examined weekly and more

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formally monthly. It is also subject to annual RoSPA reviews. We also have responsibility for the maintenance of, and training for, the defibrillator which is positioned in the High Street.

The state of our roads remains a key concern, including the existence of poor drainage and leaks causing excessive water egress across the roads. Effective and regular road sweeping in the High St remains an issue of focus. Potholes are also a major problem. Hampshire County Council has responsibility for maintaining the roads and NFDC for cleaning them. We regularly engage with both councils where we consider work is required. Please contact Nicky Deering ([nicky.deering12@gmail.com](mailto:nicky.deering12@gmail.com)) if you have any specific concerns that you consider should be addressed. Cllr. Keith Mans and Cllr. Dan Poole normally attend the monthly BPC meetings and we are in regular discussion with them about road issues. We recognise that many of the issues are a nationwide problem, not just a Hampshire one.

Last year we had to review the litter bin arrangements across the Parish. This followed an approach in August last year by NFDC requiring that we pay for litter and dog waste collection on 9 bins. The NFDC request was for an annual £10,000 fee for continued collections from these bins. It was explained, and independently confirmed, that we were one of the few remaining parish councils not being charged in this way. Without payment, they would withdraw litter collection wef 1 April 2024. The parish council considered the scale of this proposed charge to be poor value for money. Our predicament was reported in on the front page of the Lymington Times at the time. After due consideration we decided to remove 4 bins resulting in a 50% reduction in the proposed NFDC charge, which we have reluctantly agreed to. This charge alone has materially increased our 2024/25 Precept by over 40%. We understand that the removal of bins, which has successfully been achieved by a number of parish councils, brings with it risks whilst members of the public get used to taking their rubbish home. We will therefore monitor the situation carefully across the parish where we have had to remove bins.

There is a high volume of traffic going through the centre of our village and unfortunately we have our fair share of speeding. We keep this under review including being actively involved with the Speedwatch programme, which has been successful in getting drivers and riders to slow down, and also in issuing speeding tickets to offenders. We own and maintain the CCTV equipment that monitors traffic coming through our village. This equipment has been largely replaced this year and we are grateful to the Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioners' office which provided a grant to support this.

Over the last couple of years we have been looking to support local businesses in Beaulieu, including through the creation of a Beaulieu village website ([www.beaulieuvillage.co.uk](http://www.beaulieuvillage.co.uk)). If you have not yet used it, please take a look and let us have your comments.

We maintain close contact with the New Forest Planning Authority, in particular in dealing with planning applications. Last year we made recommendations on 26 planning applications and undertook 15 site visits on some of the larger or more complex planning proposals.

We also maintain contact with the NFDC and also other local parish councils through the SE Quadrant Meetings, which are held regularly during the course of the year, to discuss common parish council issues across the New Forest. We also represent the Beaulieu parish on the New Forest Consultative Panel which helps ensure the conservation of the special qualities of the National Park.

## **Beaulieu Parish Council 2024 Annual Review**

We are focused in managing all of our costs and ensuring we deliver value for money. It was therefore only after significant consideration that we have had to increase the 2024/25 precept to £19,036, which reflects the new NFDC waste collection cost. We fully recognise that this increase is unwelcome news to many in our community in these difficult economic times.

We are privileged to reflect the needs of the Beaulieu community and we welcome all feedback and participation from the parish. Please do come along to our monthly meetings to be part of the debate, especially if you have issues that you wish to discuss. Details of future meetings over the next year are on our website ([www.beaulieuparish.co.uk](http://www.beaulieuparish.co.uk)).

**3 May 2024**