

HENGISTBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (HENRA)



Minutes of the Members Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd October 2024 in St. Nicholas'

Committee members present: Abigail McMullen (Chair), Nick Clarke (Treasurer), Colin Baker (Secretary), Stuart Dickie (Vice Chair), David Freed, Pat Butler, Sean McMullen, Hilary Baker, Deborah Bergson, Max Buttinger, Ray Hatchard

Attendance: ~ 90

1. Opening remarks from Abi McMullen, HENRA Chair

Abi welcomed everyone and provided a summary of hot topics and good news stories since the last meeting:

- It was agreed that if 60% of > 100 members responding to a survey agree, HENRA will work with MSBHA and HHO to lobby BCP to reinstate the Holloway Dock bridge.
- Members are invited to email Abi with their thoughts as to whether local charities relevant to HENRA's membership should be offered short speaking slots at some meetings.
- A rose bed in the Community Garden is planned to commemorate all who served HENRA in the past including past Chairs, Avril Ogden and Mike Hack who have sadly passed away in 2024.
- Thanks to grants received from The National Lottery Community Fund, the Talbot Village Trust and HENRA plus a generous legacy and nearly three years of fund raising, a contract has been let to replace the East roof at St. Nicholas' before Christmas.
- A member's relative was the first life to be saved by the defibrillator that HENRA helped purchase for the porch at St. Nicholas'. The device had only been installed for 7 weeks before it was successfully used.
- The local 'car sleeper' is no longer in the area and is receiving care.



- Cycle theft / nuisance riding is not generally reported – the Police need to receive reports so that sufficient resources can be mobilised.
- HENRA membership is growing steadily, we now have 568 members from 345 households. However, with around 2,500 dwellings in the catchment area there are many who we do not yet reach, and a recruitment flyer will be distributed to all addresses in the area during January.
- Members are reminded to change their annual Standing Order to £5 from January 2025. A few £3 payments were received in September – if these are not to be treated as donations the payees should make themselves known to Nick or Abi so an adjustment can be made to next year's subscription.

2. Guest Speaker – Tom Hayes, MP

HENRA was very pleased that our new Labour MP had agreed to be our guest speaker so early into the new parliament and Tom provided an interesting and absorbing insight into his first few weeks as our MP. He opened by saying that it was obvious that HENRA was a successful Residents' Association, not just by the fact that large numbers of people attend the meetings each month but from the range of community projects and topics that Abi had touched upon in her opening remarks. Tom's key priorities are to dispel the feeling of hopelessness that many experience, and to accurately represent the concerns expressed by constituents of Bournemouth East in parliament.

Tom talked about the importance of primary care; local transport issues (including illegal parking); reaching out to the large Jewish population in Bournemouth; tackling tax havens and corruption; environmental issues (particularly around water quality in our rivers and on our beaches); the importance of further education and his support for local schools including St. Peter's; tackling crime; and identifying new growth sectors such as energy storage.

In conclusion Tom quoted Maya Angelou: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better" as this is the approach he is taking in Westminster. He is focussed on developing a greater understanding of residents' views rather than on party political positioning. Although not everyone will agree with everything he does as our MP, he will always represent the views of the local community to the best of his ability in parliament. Tom then took questions from the members:

Q1. Residents of Compton Court feel aggrieved that their requests for a regrading of council tax appear not to be heard by BCP.

A1. Tom will happily meet with residents of Compton Court to understand their concern before raising this matter with the relevant officers.

Q2. The proposed redevelopment of the caravan park in Wick Village raises several transport related safety issues but BCP's highways department appears not to be interested in residents' concerns.

A2. Tom noted that BCP council has undergone significant surgery and reorganisation in recent years. He will contact the relevant officers to explain why this (and other) issues are of such great importance to residents.

Q3. A member raised the lack of support for Dementia sufferers.

A3. This is on Tom's 'wish list' of topics for the Treasury to tackle, and he will raise it again in Westminster, but he is aware of several good things happening locally.

Q4. Judy Richardson raised the importance of not rushing into a solution for the widely recognised SEND and Social Care deficiencies.

A4. Tom agreed that we must get this right.

Q5. A member noted that there were still many adverts for 'junk food' and several common foodstuffs contain carcinogenic ingredients.

A5. Tom felt that public health promotion and the right public health messaging should be improved.

Q6. A member asked why Tom had supported the removal of the winter fuel payment in parliament when many pensioners although not qualifying for pension credit will suffer this winter.

A6. Tom explained that he believed that it was only right that the benefit (in common with most other benefits) is means tested. The pension credit threshold is certainly problematic, but the country can not afford to give the winter fuel payment to all pensioners. Local help is available from the council for household support and anyone not yet receiving pension credit who might qualify is urged to register.

Abi thanked Tom for his much appreciated talk and the open and honest way he approached the Q&A session. Tom responded by saying that he would love to come back to a future meeting [*Secretary's note: Tom has accepted an invitation to be our guest speaker at next year's AGM on 7th May*] to listen more to member's concerns and to take more questions. In the meantime, regular surgeries are being held in the constituency and Tom will continue 'knocking on doors' to find out what local resident's want him to focus on in parliament.

3. Guest Speaker – David Richmond-Coggan, RNLI

David gave an enjoyable and informative talk about the work of the RNLI both nationally and locally, focussing on the Lifeboat Stations of Dorset.

He shared several video clips during his presentation including a great film from the 1960s of a lifeboat rescue out of Mudeford and dolphins joining a jet ski call out in Poole harbour.

During a Q&A session at the end of his talk, members asked several questions including what the retirement age is for lifeboat personnel and what proportion of rescues are leisure users and commercial (predominantly fishermen) sea farers.

As the RNLI is almost entirely funded by legacies and individuals, donations are always much appreciated, and David thanked HENRA for the donation of £272 given to the Mudeford Lifeboat Station earlier this year. Anyone who would like to help the RNLI in any way is always welcome.

4. Ward Councillors Update

Judy Richardson is working on a committee at BCP to determine what Adult Social Care should look like in the BCP area. Anyone who has experienced Adult Social Care in the NCP area is invited to email their impressions (both good and bad) to judy.richardson@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

5. Closing Comments

Abi thanked everyone for attending and for the fantastic baubles that members had donated in readiness for our carols, mulled wine and mince pie evening on 4th December which will feature the choir of St. Katharine's Primary School led by Claire Smith. Any bakers amongst our membership are asked to email Abi with the promise of one or two dozen home-made mince pies to share with HENRA members and our guests on the night.

Members are invited to bring any unwanted Christmas decorations/baubles that they may have to our November meeting, which has a great line-up of speakers talking about the Roundhouse Project at the Hengistbury Head visitors centre, an update on the Ringed Plovers on the sandspit, PROBUS and Neighbourhood Watch.