



**Churchill Gardens Community Association  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30TH APRIL 2024**

**Present:**

**Committee:** Nick Coram (Chairperson), Jack Maguire (Vice Chairperson), Adam Playfair (Treasurer), Sammy Davies (Secretary), Zoe Keeping (Committee Member), Katerina Svetlikova (Committee Member), Abigail McQueen (Committee Member).

**Guest:** Cllr Patrick Canavan

**1. Churchill Gardens Hub/Park Cafe Tender**

Cllr Canavan has asked Martin Whitchurch to include oversight of the Growzone in the lease for the Churchill Gardens Hub/Park Cafe. He has met with the Director of Environment and will continue to push forward.

Growzone is informally being looked after by two local residents who have undertaken some clearing and planting. Parks have approached CGCA to ask if we would be willing to take over management of the Growzone pending the outcome of the tender process. All present agreed that it would be problematic for us to take control of the Growzone at this moment in time and likely to cause unnecessary conflict with residents who are currently using the space.

It was noted that the fence posts and gate remain in situ but the wire fencing has been removed. This fencing was installed by a private contractor instructed by Lainey Norman, former Project Co-ordinator with BCP Council ASPIRE Project not Parks. This is why the fencing did not meet the normal specification required. Nick confirmed that the wire was removed by local residents as it was already pulled down and causing a health and safety hazard. Zoe raised the fact that CGCA and our members had been consulted on about the prospect of a fence being put around the Growzone and the vast majority of our members did not want it. The ASPIRE Project went ahead with it regardless. A local resident has started to

plant a living willow fence in between the remaining fence posts. This would look far more attractive than a chicken wire fence but there are still some issues as Jacqui Van Bommel - BCP Council Landscape Architect who is overseeing the delivery of the Churchill Gardens Masterplan does not want willow planting near the raised beds or standpipe.

Zoe confirmed that the standpipe in the Growzone is still supplied by mains water from the Churchill Gardens Hub building. The lock keeps being removed so the tap is often left on, flooding the Growzone. It was supposed to be supplied by the £7K Rainwater Harvesting System paid for by Dave Wells Properties that has never been operational. Water costs will currently be being absorbed by BCP Council but will fall to the new leaseholder.

**ACTION:** Nick will go back to Martin Whitchurch to let him know that CGCA will not be taking over management of the Growzone at this time but will report any concerns regarding health and safety, damage or antisocial behaviour.

## **2. Street Cleaning/Refuse Collection**

Discussion around how and why underground bins and other solutions are being implemented in other areas across BCP Council area but Churchill Gardens remains in the same situation. Cllr Canavan advised that it has been possible for different bins to be installed in other areas as a result of private developers not Council funds.

Last BCP Council Enviro-Clean was organised by Tina Kirkman BCP Council Development Officer two years ago after an MDT meeting instigated by Zoe, Jack and Ralph. Trees were trimmed back then. Noted that many of the trees in Churchill Gardens are protected but also need to be trimmed back to reduce the amount of leaf fall in the road.

Nick suggested that CGCA should agree a Service Level Agreement with BCP Council to ensure that minimum and expected standards are met in terms of refuse collection. Nick raised the point that flytipping is responded to IF we send photos to Cllr Canavan not just as a matter of routine. Committee members who live on the square confirmed that regular bins are being collection but recycling bins are not. Ongoing issue with poor/inadequate signage on bins. Lack of information given to residents. No information available in different languages. Jack pointed out that the 'no fly tipping' signs actually show a symbol of a black bin bag with a red cross through it which could lead to confusion.

Cllr Canavan confirmed that the communal bins will be going as it has recently come to light that the bins and flytipping problem is being Churchill Gardens Conservation Area Status at risk. Underground bins will offer a solution but need funding. Conservation Area Status should open up other funding opportunities.

All agreed that an easy solution to the recycling problem would be for the recycling bins to be removed or replaced with more general waste bins and then give residents who want to recycle

their own bins. This solution has been put to the Council many times before but should be presented again.

Other suggestions were to work with local landlords such as Dave Wells Properties, who own and manage the majority of private rented accommodation around the square, to take some responsibility for recycling and flytipping collection.

WISE are still doing collections on behalf of the Council. Watsons contract has ended. The Council's view is that flytipping is from local residents. It is obvious that people living in and around the square will flytip but when this happens it is domestic waste. The problem is the large amount of industrial and commercial waste being flytipped in and adjacent to the communal bins. It is widely acknowledged that communal bins attract flytipping. This is not a problem specific to Churchill Gardens. Cllr Canavan has spoken to Tina Kirkman about holding a skip day that would give local residents the opportunity to dispose of large, bulky items. This used to happen many years ago but was stopped due to cost implications. Zoe suggested that a regular skip day could run alongside a 'Give or Take' event, 'Waste Not, Want Not' event and 'Repair Cafe' to really engage residents, encourage recycling and repurposing and reduce the amount of rubbish going to landfill. CGCA could play a pivotal role in organising and running these events in partnership with the Council.

**ACTION:** Cllr Canavan to speak to the Council about the possibility of giving residents their own recycling bins.

Other solutions to be put forward by the Committee representative at the next MDT meeting.

### **3. CCTV**

There is no money to install CCTV in Churchill Gardens and connect to Madeira Road Police Station. The Council were going to speak to the Environment Agency about covert monitoring.

Adam suggested that private CCTV could be an option. Many residents already have CCTV or Ring doorbells that capture flytipping. Need more signage to warn offenders that CCTV is in operation in the area. From a prosecution point of view residents need to capture evidence of material dumped and the vehicle number plate.

There are CCTV cameras on the outside of the Churchill Gardens Hub building but no-one seems to know how or where these cameras are monitored. Sammy confirmed that the Police have recently asked to access the CCTV following incidents in the Park but have been unable to access.

**ACTION:** Zoe will ask Jacqui Van-Bommel at BCP Council about the CCTV as she oversaw and signed off the building.

### **4. Children's Play Area**

Cllr Canavan confirmed that Churchill Gardens has risen to the top of the priority list but at a time when the Council have no money. BCP Council is undertaking a large piece of work looking at the development of play areas and play equipment. Nick, Abi and Zoe attended a meeting several weeks ago with the Council about the play area where it was agreed that the Council would provide CGCA with costs to replace broken play equipment and to bring back play equipment such as the slide that was removed when the new building went in. At this meeting the suggestion was put forward to move the benches back from the footpath to prevent the footpath being blocked by people who congregate around the benches.

Nick raised the point that the Council have a responsibility to maintain the children's play area even if there is no money to improve. CGCA can partner with the Council to fundraise to help pay for equipment but should not be expected to pay for general and ongoing maintenance.

**UPDATE FROM BCP COUNCIL 14/05/24:** The basket swing seat from store has been installed. The wetpour surface around the trampoline is scheduled to be patched. 2 gate closure arms have been ordered. 2 of the 4 flat seats have had to be removed and the lugs on the frame need welding.

**Costs:**

- Purchase and install 1 flat seat with chains and shackles (2.3m from frame to ground), welding of lugs. £420.00 (inc welding at height costs)
- Install 2nd hand stainless steel slide from store with Tigermulch wet pour surround: 27m<sup>2</sup> surface + £5,000.00. Installation of slide £2245 inc of 4m<sup>3</sup> of concrete foundations.
- Move 4 heritage benches back from the diagonal path, tarmac area in front, 2x2m £480

**5. Anti-social behaviour**

Cllr Canavan has been speaking to the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Office, Reuben Hawkwood. There have been no instances of antisocial behaviour in Churchill Gardens recently. This is not the case. There have just been no reported instances of anti-social behaviour. Sammy reported that much of the anti social behaviour is perpetrated by people from outside of the community who come into contact with regulars who live in supported housing on the square or come to Churchill Gardens to drink or spend time with others. Sammy and Joy Cafe are keen to support the street drinkers and homeless community who frequent Churchill Gardens. We Are With You is the only support available locally and there is little or no help available for many of the people who come to Churchill Gardens to drink. Whilst there was an overall acceptance and understanding of the issues facing people it was noted that the presence of large groups of people drinking and smoking in the park can be off putting for some and can lead to people feeling unsafe, especially after dark. CGCA has applied to the Operation Relentless Fund for funding for solar bollard lighting (with agreement from the Council).

General discussion regarding what is and isn't deemed to be anti-social behaviour. Consensus that people no longer report anti-social behaviour because it's now accepted as the norm. Zoe and Sammy both expressed concern around criminalising vulnerable people who actually need our support and are very much part of the community. Need to consider how their behaviour impacts on others and explore ways of managing the different needs of different groups of people who use Churchill Gardens. Cllr Canavan pointed out that we need to start reporting incidents, even if nothing comes of it, in order to give the Council a realistic picture of what is happening in Churchill Gardens. The more we report incidents the more likely we are to attract resources and funding to deal with it.

Zoe suggested that CGCA could look at heading up a 'Park Watch' scheme - similar to the traditional Neighbourhood Watch schemes. These schemes can attract funding and serve to engage residents and the local community in monitoring and reporting anti-social behaviour and crime in the area. Park Watch schemes can also act as a deterrent and help to empower local residents.

It was noted that Churchill Gardens is suffering as a result of a significantly reduced police presence. PSCO Kate Ementon is no longer a PSCO and is very much missed as she regularly visited Churchill Gardens, knew the people and was able to deal with situations fairly and proportionately. There are no PSCOs now. Sammy reported that she had witnessed two prolonged attacks happening in Churchill Gardens that she called in to the police but no response.

**ACTION:** CGCA to explore Park Watch Scheme and encourage residents and visitors to Churchill Gardens to report ALL incidents of anti-social behaviour:

**UPDATE:** Funding application for solar bollard lighting was unsuccessful.

## **6. Future Meeting Dates**

**Tuesday 21st May** - Invite extended to Coastline Community Trust Trustees. Nick to prepare questions for Trustees in advance. Sammy suggested that Becky and David would be the best people to attend. Also need to talk to Coastline/Joy Cafe about shared management of the allocated community space within the Churchill Gardens Hub building and bookings.

**Tuesday 25th June AGM** - Need to drive membership. Make the AGM a social event as well as business. Report back on achievements to date and financial position. Voting and nominations. Food. Nick to invite Reuben, Anti Social Behaviour Officer from BCP Council to attend as a guest.

