

West Cliff House Owners' Association

Newsletter May 2021

Dear House Owner

We hope this newsletter finds you all well and enjoying a little more freedom.

The big issue that has been taking up a lot of the committee's time has been responding to the footpath modification order request and the re-routing of the bridleway. We have also been busy with on-going maintenance and planning for the future. Read on to find out more.....

Responses to the survey

First of all a big thank you to everyone who responded to the survey. We had a total of 93 responses as follows:		
Q1 Do you support the Committee's proposal to object to the application for a DMMO to have the four Cliff Walks and Hill Rise included as Public Rights of Way on the Definitive Map?	Yes 90	No 3
Q2 Do you support the Committee's proposal to resist the reinstatement of the Bridleway and update the Definitive Map to realign it with Brit View Road, suggesting an alternative route outside the Estate?	Yes 86	No 6

Public Rights of Way (DMMO)

We are waiting for more information from the applicant and will be submitting a formal objection to the DMMO change request. We can substantiate that access to the estate has always, since construction, been marked as private and that the current and previous committees have taken various steps over the years to make it clear to the public that they do not have any rights over the estate except those shown on the definitive map. The fact that there have been signs on the estate for many, many years making it clear that this is a private estate further supports our case, as does the response from owners to our survey supporting the committee's view that these roads should not be public rights of way. Dorset County Council has told us that it could take anything from five to 10 years for the Council to come to a decision as there is a huge backlog of cases. Before making a decision the Council will open a consultation and write to all affected properties. At this point further evidence can be submitted and the Council will then rule on the application. If this decision is unfavourable to the Estate there is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State, whose decision can also be appealed. However, if our evidence is sufficiently strong, the Council may determine that the position is irrefutable and not take it any further.

Re-routing the Bridleway

We have had a number of discussions with the Definitive Map Technical Officer (Kerry Smyth) who is leading on the issue of re-routing the bridleway through the Estate. We have also had a meeting with her and the Senior Ranger (Russell Goff) on site to discuss their proposals and our alternative suggestions. We made them aware of the results of the recent owners' survey and that the Committee do not accept that to route the bridleway along the current Brit View Road is merely attempting to re-instate the position from the 1960's as Brit View is not in the same position as the original abandoned path.

Treasurers' Report – May 2020 – April 2021

To date we have received £8,790 income from 123 subscribers (includes 3 pre-payments for 2021-2). Seven subscriptions remain unpaid (£525) despite active chasing. See note below on how we plan to manage non-payers from this year. The Association has £12,682.36 cash in the bank as of 30th April 2021.

We have spent a total of £9760.64 of which:

- £7789.84 was spent on estate maintenance (grass and verge cutting, signage, fencing, road resurfacing) and
- £1970.80 was spent on administration (Website, Dropbox data storage, legal advice and land registry maps)
- Excess of Expenditure over Income (drawn from reserves): £1484.53

Work done in 2020-2021

Maintenance

- Drains - repairs to damaged sewerage pipe in Meadway, attend a water leak at a house in Hill Rise and attend to a sunken meter outside a house in Brit View Road.
- Roads – lay hardcore from the gate at upper West Walk to Cowleaze gate, temporary removal of verge at a property in Meadway, repairs to Brit View Road, 3rd & 4th Cliff Walks and Hill Rise entrance.
- Gates - install 5 new gates at top of Cliff Walks and West Walk, temporarily disable gate latch in upper West Walk and adjust latches and hinges on Cliff Walk gates.
- Signage - signs on Hill Rise and Cliff Walks and replacement of post and sign at entrance to West Cliff Road.
- Gardening – maintenance of common verges.

Other work done

- New website fully operational.
- Co-ordinated a coronavirus support group.
- Attended Symondsburry Parish and Resilience Committee meetings to ensure the estate has a voice in parish issues.

Your subscriptions

The committee is recommending that the annual subscription remains at £75 (£70 if paid before 1st July 2021). We are really hoping that every house owner pays as this money is used to cover the costs of maintaining roads, surface drains, side paths and grass verges. Without your subscriptions we cannot pay for work to be done on the estate and, over time, the estate will deteriorate. Details of how to pay are included with this newsletter.

We know that there is always a small number of owners who choose not to pay a subscription. In accordance with the property deeds for each house, owners are liable to pay their proportion of the actual costs of essential works undertaken which benefit their property. This can vary hugely depending on the works undertaken and the number of properties benefitting. By not paying a subscription, owners are expressing their preference to pay this way instead.

Therefore, from 2021 onwards the WCHOA committee, on behalf of the estate trustees, will calculate charges on a property by property basis for all works undertaken and will individually invoice those owners who have not paid their subscription fee. In most cases we believe that this will result in a greater contribution than the subscription fee.

Annual General Meeting

Because of Covid-19 we did not hold an AGM last year. Now that we are moving out of lockdown we are planning to hold one and have set a provisional date for **Saturday 10th July 2021 at 2pm at Haddon House.**

We are aware that not everyone can make a meeting in person and so we are also going to allow people to attend virtually using Zoom. To do this you will need access to Zoom (free to download on a smart phone or computer). You will also need a link to the meeting, password and meeting ID. If you would like to attend via Zoom could you send an email to mail@westcliffestate.co.uk and we will send this to you.

The meeting is, of course, subject to any local or national restrictions and will only go ahead in person if we are allowed to meet indoors. If we cannot meet in person we may still be able to hold the meeting using Zoom.

The agenda for the meeting will be circulated shortly. If there is anything you would like to add please email the secretary on mail@westcliffestate.co.uk.

Future of WCHOA

At present West Cliff is set up as a trust run by trustees who effectively own/hold the land belonging to the estate 'in trust'. The trust is managed by a volunteer committee. This has worked well for a number of years but does have some drawbacks, particularly around ensuring trustees resign in a way that satisfies Land registry.

Over the years, various committees have discussed other options such as establishing a limited company or a company limited by guarantee (slightly different legal structures). The current committee is looking into options and hope to present some thoughts to owners in due course.

If any owners have experience in this field please get in touch with the committee as your input would be welcome.

Information for owners

Drains

A number of house owner recently reported soapy water in the stream that runs behind properties in Meadway. The problem is intermittent. We have been in contact with the Environment Agency who have advised us to monitor the situation. They think the cause could be soapy water from car washing.

Could all house owners please make sure that they connect their water outlet pipes correctly. If you're not sure how to do this email WCHOA on mail@westcliffestate.co.uk and one of the committee may be able to advise you.

Deeds

The committee has noted issues raised by owners about other owners allegedly being in breach of the terms of their deeds. The deeds, and the covenants in them, vary depending on which part of the estate houses are located. Restrictions can include running a business, building or placing habitable structures in gardens, putting up fences etc. It is important that all owners are aware of the covenants and restrictions in their deeds and comply with these as failure do so may result in civil action. The committee cannot and does not get involved in these matters unless we are asked to do so by a significant number of owners.

Seagulls and wildlife

It's that time of year when seagulls and other wildlife are breeding and setting up homes. Although this can be annoying it is illegal for anyone who is not licensed to interfere with nests.

We hope to see you (either in person or on screen) at the AGM in July. Until then stay safe and well and remember to pay your subscription fee.

Warmest wishes, WCHOA Committee

<https://www.westcliffestate.co.uk/>

Dear House Owner

May 2021

Estate Maintenance Subscriptions 2021-2022

We hope that you and your family are continuing to stay well in these difficult times.

In the meantime, your Committee has been working to maintain the Estate, keeping our surface water drains clear, repairing pavements, maintaining verges and common areas and installing gates and signage on the Cliff Walks to deter non-residents from using the Estate as a thoroughfare. Next year we intend to continue these essential works with further road and common area maintenance.

This has to be funded by residents, which is why there is an annual Estate Maintenance Subscription – this will be £75.00 for 2021-22, with a reduction to £70 if paid before 1st July 2021

You can pay your contribution by one of the following methods:

- by cheque made out to 'WCHOA' and delivered to the Treasurer at the address below, or
- by Bank Transfer – the account details are:
 - Account name: **WEST CLIFF HOUSEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**
 - Sort Code: **40-13-28**
 - Account Number: **51381296**

Please include your house address when paying so that I can update my records. If you have already paid, please accept our grateful thanks and let me have the details so I can rectify my records.

Many thanks

