

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON 10th

March 2025

Question from Mr M

I wish to pose a question to the overview and scrutiny team regarding the maintenance of the grand vista and surrounding areas. This area has not been maintained well in recent years with reduced mowing leading to long unsightly grasses Which make them unusable for recreation and which also pose a fire hazard a risk which will be exacerbated by increased footfall along the new paths to the soon to be opened Beaulieu station.

If you weren't aware - Beaulieu means beautiful place - when the grasses aren't cut the area is anything but.

Last year the vista was partially cut 3 times by the council - twice to an unsatisfactory length for recreation - the third and last time it was fully cut to a proper recreation useable height for a photo opportunity for our new MPs Lib Dem MP internet profile picture - see below.

Our children and grandchildren are unable to enjoy the Vista due to the long grasses - we were not consulted on this change in policy as was promised in the 2020 Green flag proposal signed off by Councillor Moore which claimed the parks were to be maintained for all

- to quote from that green flag proposal

"Our parks and green spaces are some of the most valuable community assets we have. They are the precious jewels of our landscape to be treasured and maintained for people of all ages and from all backgrounds.

Their importance cannot be underestimated, nor their necessity overlooked.

The combination of the facilities on offer at the group of parks provide something for all

age groups and provide a mix of facilities to meet the needs of the communities they serve from the formal to the informal. Beaulieu Park is a sports park whilst Boleyn Gardens and The Green Triangle offers local residents a top-quality millennium park with a quality landscape for family recreation.

Over the life of this plan it is our aim to provide parkland that caters for the needs of the visiting public. "

- IT DOES NOT!

We have heard that "wilding" is the reason for this change in policy - we weren't consulted at all - we also know its cost cutting under a "green/ sustainability/ Bio diversity" soundbite excuse.

Fires have happened before in and around the park and the risks of this repeating is higher given the increased footfall to the station. The long grasses dry out in the summer and one discarded cigarette or broken glass can be all that's needed to cause another fire putting properties and people at risk.

We met Marie Goldman at a council meeting last year and mentioned these concerns around fire risks and park maintenance and other relevant concerns such as parking post the opening of the station - the very next day the park was cut to normal length - we wondered why but sadly it seems it was for a photo opportunity for her MPs Page - amazing that funds are available for that but not for regular upkeep for recreational use .

We have been told a "generic fire risk assessment has been done - this area is anything but generic and the nature of it will change again soon with the new paths and increased footfall of people using the station - we have had our own risk assessment done by qualified people and it gives a VERY different risk outcome to councillor Moores so called "generic" one.

I would like to understand why this area isn't maintained in the spirit of the 2020 green flag proposal and more importantly in the interests of safety given the clear and growing fire risks - also, why residents were not consulted and what will the council be doing to mitigate an even higher fire risk once the station opens?.

As residents around the vista we pay the highest rates and want our surroundings to look presentable and useable by our grandchildren and children - allowing the area to gradually decline through poor maintenance increases the risks of fire, makes it less appealing as it increases littering , dog fouling and impacts property values hence our wish for it to be looked after properly.