

**Subject:** Highcliffe beach hut proposal

Dear Rob,

As you will be aware, as the County Councilor I have received a large number of concerns from residents about the beach hut proposal, a Borough council matter on which, despite also being a Borough councillor, I had no prior information or input and on which I was put under the constraints of confidentiality.

I have of course worked hard to bring forward to CBC the concerns of residents and have now succeeded in bringing the whole proposal to the CBC Scrutiny Committee, of which I am Vice Chairman.

A report is now being compiled by the relevant officers, and will be presented on 19th July to Scrutiny committee. It will be up to members of that committee to scrutinise the process which has led up to this point, to assess the present situation, and to consider how this project should go forward.

I hope I have replied to all letters, emails and phone calls on the subject, but if you can disseminate this information through the Association to reach the wider audience you command it would be a help.

I have copied Josephine from FOHBAC into this with the same aim of reaching those people who I have not yet contacted.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Dedman  
Dorset County Councillor  
Mudford and Highcliffe Division

Dear Lesley,

Thank you very much for this information, I hope that the Scrutiny Committee can straighten out this debacle. A big concern of the Residents, as you know, is the lack of transparency, consultation and democracy shown by the Council over this and other matters of Local Government.

We realised and acknowledged very early on that several Councillors and CBC departments were deliberately excluded from the decisions on the Beach Dwellings, the bigger issue seems to be :-

How is this allowed to happen,  
How many other potentially unpopular, wasteful projects are in the pipeline, and  
What lessons can be learned for the future.

We elect our Councillors, in a democratic process, to represent our views and ambitions to the Council. Whilst it is important that we should all take an interest, we should not have to constantly monitor and protest over these matters.

Our Councillors are our representatives and we trust them to make these representations for us, if the Councillors are being marginalised and blind-sided then the process doesn't work.

I hope the Scrutiny Committee will acknowledge that many residents are well qualified to analyse and comment on these situations with backgrounds and skill sets in a variety of disciplines.  
Their concerns are carefully formulated, not the product of selfish nimbyism or ill-informed gossip.

With your approval I will put the text of your email and my reply onto the HRA website. By the date of issue of our next magazine this should have been resolved and we can report the outcome as fairly and accurately as possible.  
I wish you well with the difficult task ahead.

Yours sincerely

Rob Austin  
HRA-CIC