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Mr Chris Noble
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New Forest District Council
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DRAFT LETTER FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

By email: Chris.Noble@nfdc.gov.uk

[15] October 2026

Dear Mr Noble

Beaulieu car park lighting

Thank you for your detailed response to Cllr. Poole regarding the lighting in Beaulieu Village Car Park, which the Parish Council has now discussed.

The Council fully supports the concerns raised by Charles Cooke-Hurle. The impact of the car park lighting on neighbouring residents and the wider village environment has been an issue for some considerable time, and the Council has agreed to work with you to find a satisfactory resolution.

We appreciate the work undertaken with Hampshire County Council to assess the technical and financial implications of converting the lighting to a motion-sensitive system. We also recognise that the existing arrangements, particularly the programmed dimming of the lights, already provide some mitigation.

However, we remain concerned that the response does not address the broader issues Charles raises in his original letter.

Our principal concern is that this is not merely a question of energy savings or financial payback. The car park lies within the Beaulieu Conservation Area, in the heart of the New Forest National Park, where protecting dark skies, reducing unnecessary artificial lighting, and preserving the village's character are especially important.

The existing lighting is a significant and ongoing nuisance to neighbouring residents. There are also legitimate concerns about its wider environmental impact, including light pollution and disturbance to nocturnal wildlife. These matters were central to the original representations but do not appear to have been fully considered in the response. We would welcome a more detailed assessment against the relevant conservation-area and National Park policies, including those relating to dark skies and artificial lighting.

We fully recognise the importance of maintaining adequate lighting for public safety, including access to the public conveniences. We would therefore not support switching the lights off altogether between midnight and 5 am. Properly designed motion-sensitive lighting seems to offer a better balance between safety, residential amenity, and environmental protection.

You also raise the possibility that lights switching on and off at night could be a nuisance to neighbouring properties. Whilst we recognise this possibility, we believe there is an important counterargument. Motion-sensitive lighting could deter unwanted or unlawful activity in the car park and alert nearby residents to activity at night. The village has previously experienced thefts of fixed EV charging cables from the car park charging stations, so this is not an entirely hypothetical concern. Lights that remain on continuously provide neither the same deterrent effect nor any indication that someone has entered the area. We believe these potential benefits deserve full consideration alongside any concerns about intermittent illumination.

We recognise that the estimated capital cost of up to £8,500 is not insignificant. Nevertheless, it is a relatively modest investment for the long-term management of a public facility in a highly environmentally sensitive location.

You mentioned that this type of investment might be considered across the wider streetlighting estate. Whilst we recognise the merits of a coordinated approach, we do not believe this local problem should depend on a wider programme of changes. The circumstances at this site warrant consideration in their own right, and linking it to a broader, and as yet undefined, programme would, in our view, cause unreasonable delay.

Similarly, with local government reorganisation now suspended by the Government and its future timetable uncertain, and unlikely to occur in this Parliament, we believe this is a good opportunity to resolve a longstanding local concern rather than defer it.

The Parish Council suggests that the most constructive next step is an on-site meeting with you, relevant colleagues and interested parties, including Charles Cooke-Hurle. This would enable us to review the lighting arrangements together, understand the concerns firsthand, consider practical alternatives, and agree on a sensible, proportionate way forward. We suggest that you please contact me directly so we can agree suitable dates and make the necessary arrangements.

We much appreciate your work on this and recognise the practical and financial constraints you have identified. But Council feels strongly that the environmental and residential amenity considerations deserve greater weight in the assessment. We hope that, by working together, we can find a satisfactory solution to an issue that has concerned the village for some time.

Many thanks for your help and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Deering
Clerk, Beaulieu Parish Council

Cc: Cllr. Dan Poole, NFDC