

## **Notes of meeting OVFC with the Mayor, Miguel Angel García, and Isabel Garrido, Councillor for Social Services and Health on 25/10/2024**

**OVFC:** Margaret and Gerald Hales, Paul Davies, Dirk Rheindorf, Marta Díaz, Marianne Pätzold

### **NEW CHIEF OF THE LOCAL POLICE**

At the beginning of the meeting we had the opportunity to meet José Vicente García, the administrative chief of the local police who stands in after the retirement of José Francisco Mayans (known as Mayans chief of the local police in Benitachell for the past 21 years).

- Mr. García assured OVFC that he will be always available for all matters and problems of the citizens including the drones that are regularly spotted flying above Cumbre

### **WATER**

OVFC expressed its gratitude to the Mayor, all the employees of the Town Hall and the Civil Protection volunteers for the great effort they have made during the month of August to distribute water bottles among the residents.

- The Mayor informed us that after the rains during the last week (3rd week of September 2024), the water quality has improved even more and that at the moment it is similar to the values of Jávea.

However, measures and actions must be taken for the coming summers as the drought is likely to continue:

- Next month, works will start on the preparation of a new well and its connection to the desalination plant of Benitachell.

- Another important project is the new connection to the Jávea desalination plant. This project has now been extended with three new racks. The total amount of this project is 5.200.000€ and the Town Hall is trying to get funding from the Alicante Provincial Council.

- The extension of the Jávea desalination plant would also be of great interest to Benitachell. This project is being studied by the Jávea Town Hall and AMJASA.

- Currently Hidragua is buying water all year round from the desalination plant of Jávea (AMJASA). This water is more expensive and for this reason an increase in the rates should be expected so as to adjust it to the water purchase prices.

- In the Water Consortium of Teulada-Benitachell an important change in the management of the water supply has been agreed on: the upstream water supply will continue to be managed as a whole, whereas from now on each municipality will manage the downstream water supply separately. This gives more autonomy to the municipality of Benitachell to carry out works when they become necessary.

### **RECYCLING**

- Town Hall explains that VAPF has signed the contract for the land and to build the concrete platforms for the recycling points. These will be like the one at north entrance (behind VAPF offices) and the one being built near the padel courts in Pueblo de la Paz. Equip,ent is currently being purchased.

- Budget: 2,1 million euros have been allocated for the new platforms including smart software, digital access and cameras. This seems to be a pioneer project in Marina Alta.
- No engagement on dates has been made though TH hopes before the end of 2025.

#### OVFC Requests:

In many parts of Cumbre del Sol there are no recycling bins, only black/green bins for non-recyclable waste. OVFC suggest that yellow bins should be installed close to these containers as plastic is one the principal source of waste and as we have observed that residents/tourists keep on throwing plastic in the containers for non-recyclable waste.

In addition, OVFC noted that there was no continuity in colours of the containers across Europe. It advised that an education campaign runs for several months should be run prior to the final launch of the new system.

#### The Mayor agrees to take action:

- (a) speak to the person in charge of recycling,
- (b) try to look for a solution to what constitutes plastic recycling until the new platforms will open.

#### **FIRE RISKS (3 topics)**

- OVFC expresses gratitude for Protección Civil's volunteer work (880h dedicated on 2023).
- GRANTS: The Town Hall has received a grant of 25.490€ to be allocated for rotten trees removal and reforestation labors in Pueblo Alcasar, La Joya and Calistros. A grant of €35,713.92 has been issued by the Alicante Provincial Council, and is intended for the prevention of forest fires. Specifically, for prevention actions, the elimination of damaged, sick and dry pines. This will be carried out in the area around Puig de la Llorença and Serra de la Serp. Action will be taken before the end of the year.
- OVFC draws the Mayor's attention to the Northern access including LES (potential risk for 1,800 students and children housed in the school's infrastructures every day).

#### OVFC Requests:

- that the area towards the school including the curves up the mountain and the entrance of Parque Natural Granadella (dead bushes also represent a potential risk).

#### The Mayor agrees to take action:

- (a) speak to VAPF about this issue specifically to what concerns the school and vegetation surrounding it.
- (b) bring in a technician for an analysis and diagnostic of the northern entrance and potential high risk areas detected by OVFC.

#### - ANTICIPATION. PREVENTION. GETTING COMMUNITIES INVOLVED:

- OVFC suggests and requests to gather Policía Local, Protección Civil, Bomberos, Cruz Roja and Neighbourhood Watch and held meetings with Cumbre's residents. Main objective: to provide information on how to react in case of fire.

- OVFC asks that the Town Hall shares basic ideas which could make residents feel more secure and protected.

The Mayor agrees to take action:

- (a) communication through different channels including the Town Hall's website, social media, and possibly a prevention leaflet.
- (b) held meetings possibly twice a year as OVFC requests.

## **CADASTRAL REVISION**

- The Mayor explains the need for the cadastral revision that has been carried out this year. The cadastral values had not been revised for 30 years and the values, especially in the urbanisations, were too low and had to be adapted to approximately 50% of the current market values.
- The Town Hall needs money to give an answer to all the needs of the municipality. The funded plan includes two full-time PobleNet employees exclusively for the Cumbre del Sol and it is necessary to finance the improvement of the roads (white lines) and to put radar and control cameras on the roads of Cumbre del Sol.
- In the coming years, the tax rate will continue to be reduced in order to mitigate the increase in cadastral values. This year the tax rate was lowered from 0.83% to 0.82%.

The Mayor highly recommends all citizens who have questions or doubts about the new cadastral values to go to the Town Hall where special times have been set up for information about the cadastre. These are 8, 10 and 11, 14 and 15 October from 9.00 to 14.00 and 8 and 10 October from 16.00 to 18.00 in the planning department (urbanismo) on the ground floor

## **TOURIST ACCOMODATIONS**

- At the moment the Mayor does not consider a moratorium on the issuing of new tourist licenses.
- The main problem are the illegal tourist accommodations. According to the new Valencian law on tourist accommodations, the Town Hall has to sign an agreement with the Comunidad Valenciana to take over all the management and the control of the tourist accommodations and also the competence to prosecute and fine the illegal ones.

OVFC suggests and requests to create a channel on the Town Hall website through which residents (anonymously) could report possible illegal accommodations so that appropriate action could be taken.

- With regard to the new rubbish tax that tourist accommodations have to pay from this year onwards (390€ per year), the Mayor commented that a review will be carried out and that the rate will be reviewed according to the number of places in each accommodation and also according to their cadastral value.

## **HEALTH**

Isabel Garrido gave an update of the system:

- Juan Puig joined (on July 2024) the team of Health department in Denia as Manager. He is the fourth Manager of the Marina Alta health department in 6 years and was previously the complaints manager!

- Benitachell has only one doctor (since the retirement of Dr. Regulo Lorente in May 2023). Our town should have two according to local Law.

- Our town is listed on a priority list for the Marina Alta.. This is intended to bring benefits and rights to Benitachell.

- Patients needing a prescription currently have to wait for a little more than a month.. During summer patients went to Espai La Senieta in Moraira where a doctor could provide them with a prescription. This system is no longer working.

- The Town Hall has sent several letters to the Manager and is receiving no response.

2 actions undertaken from the Town Hall:

(a) from October 2024 retired citizens are encouraged to sign a letter that will be sent the same day so as to put pressure and hope for the situation to be fixed. OVFC will provide the form as soon as the Town Hall sends it to us.

(b) the Town Hall has proposed to look to contract a doctor paid by the Town Hall budget. There seems to be a problem with data protection but a solution is being sought. IT was accepted that the situation was grave for Benitachell and affected many with potentially serious situations and conditions.

FINALLY

It was agreed that the next meeting should be in November and OVFC would contact the Mayors office.

M D, MP and MH