# Bournemouth’s beachfront blighted by rise in e-scooter chaos and open drug use



Bournemouth, once celebrated for its scenic beaches and vibrant community, now finds itself grappling with an alarming rise in antisocial behaviour. Long-time residents report a transformation of their beloved town into a veritable battleground of lawlessness, characterised by feral youths on e-scooters engaging in open drug use, vandalism, and intimidation.

According to locals, the beachfront promenade has devolved into a site of fear and frustration. Witnesses describe a pervasive atmosphere where theft and drug deals occur openly, creating an environment where families and tourists feel increasingly unwelcome. The offensive acts are highlighted by instances of young people brazenly inhaling nitrous oxide from balloons in front of sunbathers, while the stench of cannabis reportedly fills the air. The visual deterioration is stark; vibrant walls once admired by visitors are now marred with graffiti, and beach huts stand as unfortunate targets of disrespect, some even witnessing vandalism and theft.

Local businesses, too, have become collateral damage. Owners of establishments such as the Cornish Bakehouse and Jerk Hut Catering express despair over rampant shoplifting and antisocial behaviour. Staff report incidents of customers treating their shops like "self-service buffets," leaving them feeling helpless. The manager of Jerk Hut noted that, while he personally hasn't witnessed any overt wrongdoing, the fear and stories shared by his patrons offer a sobering insight into the gravity of the situation.

Compounding the issues is the burgeoning popularity of e-scooters, frequently misused on sidewalks and in crowded areas. Law enforcement has struggled to keep pace; in the previous financial year, Dorset Police confiscated over seventy-eight illegal e-scooters due to violations of usage laws. Moreover, a rise in unsafe practices surrounding these vehicles is contributing to a spike in injuries. Very recently, a woman in the town centre sustained serious spinal injuries after being struck by an e-scooter, highlighting the dangers posed by reckless riders who often evade accountability.

Deputy Mayor Anne Filer's calls for a cleanup resonate with the community's sentiment that the town has drastically declined, particularly since the lockdowns imposed during the pandemic. She points out the broken park benches, overgrown bushes, and oppressive graffiti as markers of civic decay and loss of pride in a town that once thrived on tourism. The mounting difficulties have prompted some residents to avoid going out after dark altogether, voicing concerns for their safety.

The high expectations surrounding the opening of the upscale Ivy restaurant last November seemed destined to herald a revitalisation of Bournemouth’s fortunes. With twelve thousand reservations before its debut, many hoped it would signal an invigorated economic resurgence. Yet, in the wake of its opening, residents find that luxury dining experiences starkly contrast with the raw realities of rampant drug abuse and visible neglect just steps away.

Local opinions on how to remedy these issues vary. Some point to the presence of rehabilitation centres nearby as part of the problem, suggesting that relocating these facilities might mitigate the disturbances spilling into everyday life. There is a consensus that more police visibility could aid in restoring a sense of order and safety. Chief Superintendent Heather Dixey assures the community that law enforcement is actively responding to reports of crime and antisocial behaviour, highlighting ongoing efforts to bolster patrols and engage with the public proactively.

Nevertheless, residents remain sceptical. Many perceive a disconnect between council announcements and lived experiences, noting a perceived lack of sufficient action to revert the town back to its former glory.

As Bournemouth navigates these turbulent waters, it remains to be seen whether collective action from law enforcement, local authorities, and concerned citizens can stem the tide of decline and restore the town to the vibrant seaside haven it once was. The challenges are formidable, yet many in the community cling to hope, seeking a renewed vision for a future that fosters safety, respect, and pride in this storied coastal locale.

#### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
2. Paragraphs 2, 6, 11
3. Paragraphs 2, 3, 8, 11
4. Paragraphs 1, 6, 7
5. Paragraphs 3, 7, 8
6. Paragraphs 4, 5, 11
7. Paragraphs 1, 2, 9, 10

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14678833/Our-seaside-town-paradise-destroyed-feral-youths-e-scooters-transformed-haven-drugs-people-urinate-beach-huts-embed-bongs-sand.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.bournemouthone.com/80367/> - In April 2025, Bournemouth and Poole's neighbourhood police teams began trialling SmartTag devices to identify anti-social cyclists and motorcyclists. These devices use a traceable forensic spray to mark offenders and their vehicles, aiding in linking suspects to specific incidents. Between May and July 2024, 112 calls were received regarding off-road bike anti-social behaviour in Poole and North Bournemouth, accounting for 20% of all ASB reports in Poole and 14% in North Bournemouth, notably in Winton. The initiative aims to deter such behaviour and support prosecution efforts.
3. <https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/23071460.police-seize-e-scooter-ridden-pavement-winton/> - In January 2025, Bournemouth Police seized an e-scooter being ridden on the pavement in Wimborne Road, Winton. The use of privately-owned e-scooters on public land is illegal, with only those from the Beryl hire scheme permitted. The police reminded the public that while e-scooters can be purchased, they cannot be legally ridden on UK public land, including roads and pavements, unless part of a licensed scheme.
4. <https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/24578257.e-scooters-seized-dorset-police-reaches-record-high/> - In the 2023/24 financial year, Dorset Police seized 78 e-scooters, a 25% increase from the previous year. The rise in seizures is attributed to the illegal use of e-scooters on public land, with only those from the Beryl hire scheme being legal. Dorset's police and crime commissioner expressed concerns over irresponsible retailers selling these items and emphasized that e-scooters are subject to the same legal requirements as cars, including MOT, licensing, and insurance.
5. <https://www.dorset.live/news/dorset-news/woman-suffers-serious-spinal-injury-8928300> - In October 2024, a woman in her 20s sustained serious spinal injuries after being struck by an e-scooter in Bournemouth town centre. The incident occurred around 9:10 pm on Old Christchurch Road when a man riding an e-scooter collided with her. The rider fled the scene, and police released a CCTV image seeking information. The victim required ongoing medical treatment for her injuries.
6. <https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/illegal-e-scooters-and-e-bikes-crushed-in-fight-against-crime-4954703> - In January 2025, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police initiated 'Operation Crush' to seize and destroy illegal e-scooters and e-bikes used in criminal activities. The operation aims to deter the use of these vehicles in crimes and address road safety concerns. Police reported a steady increase in the popularity of e-vehicles, leading to more incidents involving dangerous and illegal use, including drug possession and weapon carrying.
7. <https://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/2024/11/antisocial-behaviour-in-south-bournemouth-reaches-all-time-high/> - Between January and August 2024, South Bournemouth experienced a 24% increase in reported anti-social behaviour incidents compared to the previous year. A total of 3,570 incidents were reported to Dorset Police during this period. Common forms of anti-social behaviour included street drinking, littering, begging, vehicle nuisance, and rowdy behaviour. Residents expressed concerns over the deterioration of the town centre and the rise in serious crimes, including murders and assaults.