

## **Dorset Council, West Purbeck, January 2021 Report V2.6**

### **Dorset Pension Fund**

I am proud to be the Vice Chair of the Dorset Pension Fund which looks after the interest of a variety of County pension fund members and is doing well despite the economic uncertainty. Both unitary councils in the county are members along with many other public sector organisations including schools and universities, Tricuro and some housing associations. The estimated value of the pension fund's assets at the end of September 2020 was £3,045M compared to £2,696M at the start of the financial year. Since April 2020 we have seen a significant recovery from previous lows, but the outlook is still very uncertain, and we anticipate more volatility over the remainder of this financial year, Figures before a recent meeting of the board show almost 74,000 local people either paying into, or being paid out of the fund.

### **Who Cares for the carers?**

Do you regularly support an adult, or care for someone with daily tasks, a loved one or a friend? You may or may not identify yourself as a carer, but the caring you do entitles you to information, advice and support. It is very important that when you're caring for someone that you look after yourself too. This is particularly so now that some people are increasing the amount of unpaid care they provide. Caring can be very rewarding, but without the right support it can have a negative impact on your health, career, finances and relationships. You may have found that your caring role has become more challenging due to the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19), or you may have taken on new caring responsibilities. Support is available from a wide range of organisations.

If you don't have family, friends or a support network that can help you get the things you need - we can help you. Let us know the support you need by completing our online form on the Dorset Council website. There is a helpline for vulnerable people in need of vital support in the Dorset Council area 01305 221000 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or email [communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) The Dorset Council website also has up to date Covid-19 information:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx> and Adult Social Care information for Carers on [adultsocialcare.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](http://adultsocialcare.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

I am very proud to say that Laura is leading on this critical project.

### **Crookhill Depot Fire**

Many of you have asked what the current situation is following the fire at the depot in Weymouth on Sunday 15 November. 16 waste collection and other ancillary vehicles were destroyed or heavily damaged. Services were disrupted for a short while, but they are now returning to normality although there will be some residual affects for some time to come. We will try to let Parish Councils and the public know when we are informed of late or disrupted collections. Please be assured that we are moving matters forward as quickly as is feasibly possible, but we ask for your patience during this time. The Fire Services report into the incident concluded that the accidental fire started around 1:20pm under the bonnet of one of the waste collection vehicles, most likely caused by the heavy rainstorms and high winds experienced in Chickerell that afternoon. This apparently led to rainwater entering the vehicle's electrical circuits, causing a short circuit, igniting the internal components of the vehicle and allowing the fire to take hold. The report also noted that a lightning strike hitting the vehicle could not be ruled out as there were several strikes in the area during that time period. The fire then rapidly spread to the other adjacent vehicles as the flames were 'wind driven' eastward towards the site building.

### **Council employees raise £5000 for charity**

Employees from Dorset Council rallied together during the second lockdown to raise more than £5,000 for charity. Colleagues across the council organised a series of virtual events, such as a raffle, quizzes, dress-up day and a silent auction to raise money for BBC's Children In Need and local charity the Friends of Dorset Care Leavers. Some colleagues took on personal challenges too, including a sponsored silence, going sugar-free and running. A host of local business around Dorset Contributed including Camp Bestival in our area.

### **Digital Hotline**

Dorset Council's Digital Hotline is helping even more people get online thanks to a new arrangement with Age UK in Dorset who are now referring its users who need help with any IT issues to the free Hotline. The Dorset Digital Hotline on 01305 221048 is open every weekday from 10am to 12 noon The Hotline is manned by a

team of volunteer Digital Champions, who can help anyone in Dorset with computer, tablet and smartphone queries, including helping people get online for the first time. Accessing online services has never been more important and our Digital Champions are using their expertise to help people overcome any barriers that are preventing them from fully joining the digital world. The Digital Champions can help with a wide range of enquiries that come through to the hotline, including: setting up video calls such as Skype and Facetime to keep in contact with friends and family, providing help to get online for grocery shopping, setting up and using new devices, support for all digital NHS services and e-Consult and the use all digital appliances and problems solving.

Dorset Council is also teaming up with an organisation called "Everyone Connected" to identify people who were previously shielding and would benefit from receiving free tablets. Also, our Dorset Council's Digital Champion volunteers are giving training via the Digital Hotline on how to use the tablet,

### **Planning Services Systems**

We are currently undertaking a major project to transform and converge the previous 6 systems into one system. The first phase was to transfer information from the former North Dorset District Council, and this has now been completed. Data from West Dorset will be transferred in January, followed by the remaining legacy council systems. The new system should be up and running later this year and will provide a consistent and much improved system. More in later reports.

### **Dorset Libraries and Tourist Information centres (TICs)**

All 23 Dorset Council libraries opened from Wednesday 2 December along with the three TICs. They will remain open although currently the hours are restricted, and this is all dependent upon the latest government guidelines and legislation.

### **Dorset Council Local Plan**

Below is a link to the recent report identifying the status of the Dorset Council Local Plan.<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?Iid=11239&PlanId=0&Opt=3#A16723>

### **Foster Carers**

Dorset Council is joining forces with other local authorities across the south west region to call for more people to consider becoming foster carers. According to The Fostering Network, there are 6,140 children in care in the south west and 2,650 fostering households, with many more needed. Local authorities from Dorset, Bath and North East Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire have all come together to run the latest campaign. They are calling for those in the region with space in their home and their lives to consider fostering for their council. There is a huge need to raise awareness of the need for more foster carers across our region. This campaign will help people to understand that when you foster for your local council you are part of a service that is not for profit and where every penny is spent on providing a good service to the children and their foster carers. We are so grateful to all our foster carers. They make a real difference to the lives of children in our county. If you are interested in fostering, you need to be aged 21 or over and have a spare bedroom. Find out more by visiting [www.fosterindorset.co.uk](http://www.fosterindorset.co.uk) or call 01305 225568.

### **Getting help this winter**

Dorset Council and partners in the community response to COVID-19 are working together to offer help and support to struggling residents this winter. Efforts are focused on supporting families with children, people in financial difficulties and those facing loneliness and isolation over the festive season. The aim is to make sure vulnerable people have access to food and warm clothing for their children, and someone they can talk to if they need to. People experiencing financial difficulties are urged to seek help by calling the Dorset Citizens Adviceline on Freephone 0800 144 8848 or textphone 0800 144 8884. By calling the Adviceline, anyone struggling to pay their rent, mortgage, debts or other bills can access free expert help and advice and secure a referral to a local foodbank or community food initiative if needed. Comprehensive information to help people find support is also available online at [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out).

Anyone staying at home because of COVID-19 without the support of family, friends or neighbours can request help from the Dorset Together team. Support includes food shopping and delivery, collection of prescriptions, dog walking and befriending. Help can be accessed via our online form or by calling the Dorset Together helpline on 01305 221000, 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. People with queries about getting online or improving online skills can call the Dorset Digital Hotline on 01305 221048, Monday to Friday from 10am – noon. Outside of those times you can leave a message and a Digital Champion will get back to you.

### **Avian influenza precautions from December 14<sup>th</sup>**

From the 14 December all poultry and captive birds must be housed under new rules issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Due to the increase in cases of Avian Influenza (bird flu) found in both wild birds and commercial poultry flocks these additional rules have been brought in to prevent further spread of the disease. This follows the Avian Influenza Protection Zone (AIPZ) that was introduced by APHA in November. For more advice and regular updates on the latest situation, visit Government's avian flu pages. Poultry and captive bird keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 (option 7), and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301.

### **Car Parking Charges**

Following extensive discussion by Councillors, Dorset Council has revised the proposed changes to car parking arrangements. After notice was provided to Town and Parish Councils of the proposed changes in October, many people voiced their concerns, especially considering the current financial pressures faced by businesses and regarding the introduction of charges up until 8pm. The recommendations remain, as they were revised, in force in Weymouth

The recommendation for the Implementation of Sunday charging also stays as before, but Town and Parish Councils can ask for free days for special events. The Extension of morning charges in Purbeck to begin at 8am stays as was recommended. The recommendation to extend evening charges to 8pm has been withdrawn.

### **5G Project - new 5G buoys**

Dorset Council has announced the signing of a contract with JET Engineering System Solutions Ltd and Excelerare Technology Limited to deliver a network of Surf Condition Monitoring (SCM) buoys to the Lulworth Estate coastline. The trial is part of the 5G Rural Dorset project, a £6.675 million initiative which aims to assist rural communities in benefiting from next generation mobile connectivity.

The SCM buoys will measure sea state, including tidal current, temperature and wave height data, and communicate the information via 5G to project partners. The information will be displayed on the connected digital signage which will be installed at busy locations on the Jurassic Coast and will be available via a published feed, available to the general public, and accessible by the emergency services to support their operations. This is a very exciting project and when fully working will help the emergency services prevent incidents and improve coastal public safety in what is a beautiful but potentially dangerous environment. I am pleased to be leading on this project.

### **Surgery**

We are not holding face to face meetings until we are clear to do so under government guidelines. However, we would be delighted to talk to you. Please ring or email us with the subject matter so that we can prepare ourselves. Peter's email address is peterwharf@hotmail.com telephone 07986 600799 and Laura's is cllrlaura.miller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk telephone 07814 569563.

Peter Wharf & Laura Miller, Dorset Councillors for West Purbeck