

Camp Bestival Dates

Details of the forthcoming Camp Bestival event at Lulworth Castle are as follows: Thursday 29th July to Monday 2nd August; site build/break: Wednesday 14th July to Wednesday 4th August. For additional information, such as event timings and a traffic route map, please visit: <http://www.campbestival.net/info/residents-information>

Forthcoming events at the Tank Museum in Bovington

Dorset Council have received two applications from The Tank Museum to impose temporary 30mph speed limits on Bovington Lane between the southern end of the existing 30mph speed limit to a point approximately 65 metres east of its junction with Cologne Road, a distance of approximately 1,300 metres. The temporary speed limits have been requested as a traffic management solution to slow down traffic near the entrances/exits to the temporary car parks for two major temporary events. The temporary speed limits will be in place:

Friday 24th - Sunday 25th July 2021 (for "Tiger Day 15"), and

Thursday 16th - Monday 20th September 2021 (for "Tankfest 2021").

The Tank Museum will place temporary signing on the road in this area to inform the travelling public of the speed limit.

DORSET businesses have received around £250m in Government help during the pandemic.

The money, in grants and business rate relief, has been administered by finance teams at Dorset Council. The high levels of payments had only been achieved by transferring some of the council's staff from their routine work to help with the grant payments and benefit reliefs. The payments have included £170m in business grants and £55m in business rate relief with a further £32m is due to be paid out shortly in business re-start grants. Dorset Council has been judged to be one of the best performing in the country in how it has dealt with the operation.

Council's Annual Meeting

At the annual Council Meeting on the 4th May it was agreed that the council's senior roles are all to stay the same for another year. This includes the leader, the deputy leader and all the cabinet positions.

The meeting also agreed a recommendation to continue meeting virtually with powers delegated to senior officers to enact committee and council decisions. These will be passed as 'minded to' decisions until June 21st when social distancing regulations are due to be relaxed.. We are all very disappointed by the Government's decision not to allow virtual meetings to continue as we have lobbied the Government to listen to council leaders up and down the country and allow online meetings to continue. Dorset Council, like others, do not have spaces big enough for all councillors to meet whilst complying with the current Covid restrictions, although this will change if restrictions are lifted in the third week of June.**Affordable Housing**

Dorset Council has exceeded its target for providing new-build affordable housing in the county over the last 12 months. In a year like no other, with building sites restricted and materials in short supply at times; 301 safe and affordable housing has been made available for the residents of Dorset whilst the target was 300. Dorset currently has over 6000 households on the housing register, and over 300 households in temporary accommodation.

An £8m project monitoring cliff falls at key points along the Jurassic Coast

5G RuralDorset partnered with Dorset Council has announced it will develop a coastal landslip monitoring system which will use 5G connected sensors to monitor ground movement, temperature and rainfall so coastal landslips can be better understood. It is hoped that the research can prove that by using 5G sensors, the process of data collection can be made safer, more cost effective, responsive and efficient, as well as contribute to coastal resilience in the face of climate change and rising sea levels. The system will be trialled at Lyme Regis and Burton Bradstock, which are both sites with active landslides posing public safety risks for the local community and visitors. The current management and monitoring systems at Lyme Regis represents a very significant cost to Dorset Council and we hope the new system will provide significant savings in the future.

Digital arts programme

Thanks to funding from Arts Council England and a National Lottery Project Grant to develop libraries as cultural hubs, Dorset Library Service is to run a digital arts programme for young people and adults. Working with The Arts Development Company, the focus will be on celebrating diversity with a selection of artists. There will be bespoke events for specific community groups, including adults living with dementia. Activities will also support mental health in young people. The range of activities will include author events, music, arts, poetry, and dance linked to national celebrations such as National Poetry Day, Black History. All events and booking information will be available at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/LibrariesAsCulturalHubs

Helping the Deaf – a good news story

When profoundly Deaf Bridport resident John Phillips received a free smartphone from Dorset Council, he had no idea just how much it would transform his life. The 76-year-old received the gift on Christmas Eve, as part of the council's drive to help digitally connect people in need. By then John, whose only method of communication is sign language, had spent nine months in lockdown isolation, had very little contact with people and was feeling very low. With support from Millbrook Healthcare's Sight and Hearing team in Dorchester, John started to use his smartphone to communicate with people and it changed his life. He said "The best part has been contacting my friends again via WhatsApp because I had no contact with them for so long. I've been able to communicate with my oldest friend of 45 years for the first time in more than a year. We send each other videos and messages and it's been wonderful."

John is one of 50 people in Dorset who have received, or will receive, a free tablet or smartphone thanks to Dorset Council teaming up with the Good Things Foundation charity. Twenty of those devices are currently being distributed to people in the county who have learning disabilities.

Dorset Police reorganisation

Dorset Police have recently formed two Local Police Areas (LPAs) in a bid to better respond to the issues that matter most to communities in the county. The two LPAs share their borders with the corresponding councils and are made up of the County LPA, which covers the Dorset Council area and will be led by Chief Superintendent Steve Lyne, and the BCP LPA, which covers the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area and will be led by Chief Superintendent Mark Callaghan.

Police bosses hope that this will enable Dorset Police to work more proactively with partners to strengthen plans and provide a local service that works for local people across the two council areas. Over the coming months, there will be opportunities for members of the public to engage directly with local officers, both in person and on social media.

Fly-tipping

We have called for jail time for the worst offenders of fly-tipping - as it emerged it cost taxpayers more than £60,000 to clean up in less than a year. There were 1,501 incidents of fly-tipping reported to Dorset Council between April 2020 and January 2021 - costing £60,840 to clear up. During that period, 252 investigations into incidents of fly-tipping were carried out which resulted in just 10 fixed penalty notices being handed out, with 47 fines for other environmental crimes. There were 1,870 fly-tipping incidents were reported to Dorset Council in 2019-20. Council leaders have called for an increase in the punishment for the worst offenders of fly-tipping, which currently stands at an unlimited fine and up to five years in prison, as well as more freedom for the council to install video cameras to 'catch fly-tippers and litterers in the act'. We would also welcome any change in legislation that made the Enforcement Team's job easier, such as less legal bureaucracy involved in installing video cameras to catch fly-tippers and litterers in the act, or stricter rules on advertising 'man in a van' services on social media.

Four Council owned sites disposed of so far – realising £4.6million.

The four sites were sold by the end of this financial year in March with another eight or nine in preparation for sale. The four have been named as the former Mountjoy School site, Bridport; the former Norden council offices at Blandford; St Martin's at Gillingham and Roman Road, Weymouth. All are expected to be developed for housing. The council has also vacated several sites, although in some cases they were leased, rather than owned, further cutting costs. These include Furzehill, the former East Dorset District Council headquarters near Wimborne and Princes House in Dorchester. Two key south Dorset sites are still awaiting a decision – the former Weymouth and Portland HQ at North Quay and South Walks House in Dorchester which the council has said it will not be returning to.

The Council owns 600 sites of which 24 are currently occupied offices. It was always planned to reduce the number of sites as a result of the merger of the councils into one. There will be further savings and rationalization because of changing working practices accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Grid Power

Grid Power to parts of Dorset, already difficult in some areas, could get worse in the future as electric networks come under greater pressure. At a recent meeting Dorset councillors were told that some of the county's industrial estates are already at capacity. Councillors agreed that suppliers will be asked to attend a future meeting to explain their strategy, current capacity problems and how they hope to overcome problem in some areas. The committee heard that the electricity networks had not responded to the recent consultation on the revised Dorset Plan, although the meeting was told that whatever developments are proposed the network providers would be legally obliged to provide for it. There is the potential, across the county, for growth to be held back in some areas by the lack of an adequate energy supply. Problem areas for supply are across the Dorset Council area but include, locally, Dorset Innovation Park and Holton Heath Trading Park.

Summer in Dorset

Over the Easter holiday DC was able to deliver 706 funded places at face-to-face activities (and 205 virtual activity places) to children who were eligible for free school meals. We have had a wonderful response from the families who took part:

Next stop, Summer in Dorset! We want as many children to benefit from this programme as possible, therefore, we are planning a much larger, more accessible, and more exciting 6-

week programme of activities over the summer holidays. We're currently in talks with many existing activity providers, voluntary organisations, and schools so that together we can deliver a brilliant programme of enriching activities, nutritious meals, and fun. Please contact summerindorset@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk for more info.

Surgery

We are not holding face to face meetings for the moment. However, we would be more than delighted to talk to you on the telephone or via Zoom. 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 clrlaura.miller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk telephone 07814 569563.

Peter Wharf & Laura Miller, Dorset Councillors for West Purbeck