

Extreme E event - Bovington 18/19 December

Extreme E is the sport for an electric off-road racing series which will be taking place over the weekend of 18/19 December at Bovington. Whilst the event is all held off the highway within Bovington Army grounds, I thought it would be useful to inform you of the following:

This is a non-spectator event so there will be no tickets sold. With all personnel involved in the event it is anticipated there will be no more than 850 working on site. Their social media platforms all inform those interested in watching should do so on-line or via the 70+ tv stations broadcasting around the world, closer to home, this will be ITV and Sky. There will be no viewing areas from the public highway. The majority of all event vehicles will access from the east. The event build will commence 27 November and it is anticipated this will take 2 days which is when there could be increased movements on associated vehicles. There will be directional signing placed at key locations for the event vehicles – exact locations to be confirmed later. The event organisers have employed their own security firm, NuGen Security, who will be working alongside the Military's own security team

There are no road closures or temporary traffic signals required for any of the movements on or off the site, but they may consider implementing a temporary clearway for the event weekend; this is yet to be confirmed.

The organisers have requested that there is a Police presence from the Thursday prior to the event and during event weekend. The main message to promote around this event is that it is not a spectator event, there will be no viewing areas from the Public highway and those interested are encouraged to watch on-line. The following link is the events page so please take a look as if, like me, you have no idea what the event involves, hopefully the link will make it clearer. https://www.extreme-e.com/en/news/386_UK-confirmed-for-Season-1-finale

Extreme E have their own comms team who are working with media interests and their message is very clear regarding spectators so hopefully our local media will follow their lead. It may sound strange that I am repeating the no spectator status but as this is the first time in the UK this event has been held it is expected to gather a lot of interest from those who follow the sport. The general idea is that this is a pilot to see how it works.

I hope that you may feel this is an interesting event which if it works well could lead to a major sporting event in our ward which may bring welcome tourist revenues, particularly out of season. The event is being coordinated with the DIO (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) and the sponsors and the Garrison itself is not playing any part in its organisation. I would be interested to hear of any resident's experience of the event and I hope to feed all of these back to the organisers in the New Year.

Bere Regis Poole Roundabout & Rye Hill closure 1st to 5th November

I am pleased to report that the work was completed on time and the closure was kept to a minimum. Thank you to everyone who was patient and understanding during this time.

Lulworth Cove emergency Services Group

This is a group chaired by the Police and set up over a year ago to review the access and other problems generally related to tourist traffic during the summer months for Lulworth and surrounding areas including Bestival. Its aim was to try to find ways to reduce the problems caused by the increased numbers and traffic. We recently had a wash up meeting for this year

with a date in the diary to meet next year. There are various members of this group including the Police, your ward Councillors Peter and Laura, Dorset Council Highways, The Weld Estate, The Coastguard, The Ambulance Service and The Fire Services. Key areas of agreement going forward were, parking arrangements worked well and will be introduced again next year by the Estate. Work with local Community groups worked reasonably well and will continue next year.

Highways issues were much improved helped by getting all parties talking to each other via a MACC (Multi Agency Command Centre), this worked well and was useful. However there were slow police response times when roads were closed (due to the notification procedure, now resolved through the MACC process). Tow away threat worked well for illegal parking.

Ambulance and Fire Service access proved difficult but is now better understood by crews and would be impossible to change fundamentally. Few heath-fire issues and no fire-related issues at Bestival. Main demand has been assisting with cliff and water incidents in various capacities. Coastguard worked well with all other agencies. Sadly, there were more 'serious' incidents this year, with 3 deaths, coroners reports will be studied to see if there are any lessons to be learnt.

Customer Services

Following the reopening of customer access points in July, the feedback has been positive with over 2,200 customers being supported with their enquiries (July to September). Working alongside and in collaboration with our library colleagues and external partners in several of our locations, the return of customer access has been welcomed by many customers. We are seeing a gradual increase in footfall with Dorchester and Weymouth being our biggest areas of demand. The numbers are below

Dorchester – 789
Weymouth – 739
Nordon Lodge (Blandford) – 220
Wareham Library – 195
Wimborne Library - 170
Mountfield (Bridport Town Council) - 157

Enquiry types have included:

Waste – collecting small containers – 28%
Revenue & Benefits – requests for Council Tax support – 17%
Housing – housing register related – 16%
Parking – challenging Penalty Charge Notices and paying fines – 8%
Blue badge – help completing applications on the public access computers – 4%
Planning - establishing progress of planning applications – 2%
Legal – verifying proof of life request for overseas pensions – 2%
Other enquiries have comprised requests for Radar keys for disabled toilet facilities, signposting to adult social care information, financial support due to Covid, help in updating the Electoral Register, reporting road defects and issues with rights of ways.

Adult Social Care Budget 2021/22

Dorset Council faces a higher level of demand for older people's social care services than many other areas, which places significant pressure on the council's budget. We continue to lobby the Dorset MPs on a range of issues, in particular the funding crisis faced by Local Government in our health and social care system. This year Dorset Council is predicting an increase in the gross cost of care services paid for by the council of 7% or £10.3m. This

increase is due to a combination of more people needing care, and an increase in the unit costs of care charged by providers to the council. The recent announcement by the Government of an increase in National Insurance to help the NHS recover after the pandemic and to fund social care in England is welcome, but we urgently need to understand the detail of the conditions under which money will come to Local Authorities. We also need to ensure that the very welcome guarantees being given to our residents on the cap on social care costs are matched by monies passed to councils so that we are not left short.

Library Consultation

Dorset Council has launched a public consultation to inform how they develop and deliver their library service in the future. Library users and non-users are being asked to share their views. The consultation runs from 25 October 2021 to 7 January 2022 and is available online. Libraries are at the heart of Dorset's communities and provide highly valued services, including book lending, activities and events, reading groups, skills and learning, health and wellbeing, information provision, digital access and support, and art and cultural exhibitions. People of all ages can enjoy all of this and more, within a safe and welcoming environment. There are 23 council-run and eight community-managed libraries in the Dorset Council area. The current library strategy is 11 years old. Over those 11 years, there have been significant changes in public behaviour and digital technology; and the impacts of the Covid pandemic have also been felt. This consultation seeks to look to the future of Dorset's libraries – how can they best meet the needs of local residents and communities, now and over the next ten years? If anyone requires paper copies of the consultation, please contact Laura.

St Mary's School site in Shaftesbury

Katie Charles has been appointed as the Headteacher of Dorset Council's new school for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The new school is a cornerstone of the Dorset Centre of Excellence project which is taking shape on the former St Mary's School site in Shaftesbury. It is in a development phase with fantastic facilities being created to improve the lives of Dorset children with SEND, and to reduce future costs. It will open in 2022, with an initially small cohort of children, which will grow to around 280 students over the next five years.

The Dorset Centre of Excellence will also offer training and courses, making use of state-of-the-art facilities, including provision for arts, culture, music and sport. The school will be recruiting staff as it grows. Jobs will be advertised on the Dorset Council Jobs website in the coming weeks. Dorset Council took the step of securing the extensive site to meet the growing need for more high-quality special education provision. The new school is part of the council's wider £37.5 million plan to improve the lives of Dorset children with SEND. More provision is also being created at existing special and mainstream schools.

South Walks House

Dorset health organisations are working with Dorset Council to create a space for rapid access clinics in South Walks House, Dorchester, as part of a county-wide effort to tackle NHS waiting lists. The 'Outpatient Assessment Centre @ Dorset Health Village' will operate out of the ground floor of the former council offices for six months, opening in the next few weeks. The initiative is being led by Dorset County Hospital in partnership with NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Dorset HealthCare, LiveWell Dorset and Active Dorset, and will bring together a range of outpatient services under one roof in the town centre location. It also provides a (temporary) good use for a building which we are currently not using and are working to dispose of at some time in the future.

The Dorchester centre is part of Dorset's wider 'Think Big' initiative to help reduce waiting lists and bring diagnostic services closer to the community. This is one of the first schemes of its kind to get up and running in the make such good use of an existing public. The centre will be fully staffed by local healthcare teams, but they would very much like to recruit a team of volunteers to support and guide patients visiting the centre as it's a new, unfamiliar facility. Anyone who would like to volunteer is asked to contact Volunteer Centre Dorset or call 01305 269214. They would particularly like to hear from anyone who has previously volunteered in a hospital or vaccination centre, or has event marshalling experience

Change of Portfolios (Cabinet reshuffle)

Cllr Peter Wharf will move from Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change to Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health. (Cllr Wharf will continue in his role as Deputy Leader). Cllr Jill Haynes will move from Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services to Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change. Cllr Laura Miller will move from Adult Social Care and Health to Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services

Residents Survey

This independent survey is being conducted by Information by Design (Ibyd) on behalf of Dorset Council. Market Research Society (MRS) and abide by the MRS Code of Conduct. The survey is conducted online (promoted through e-newsletters and through social media) and by paper questionnaires being distributed door-to-door in selected areas of Dorset. If you have any questions, please telephone Information by Design on 01482 467467

Improving poorly insulated rented homes

Dorset Council has been awarded £98,000 of Government funding, after applying to a national competition, to improve the most poorly insulated rented homes in Dorset. In the last five years over 700 properties in Dorset have been rented with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that is in the lowest two bands (F and G). The council Housing Standards Team entered the competition with a plan to provide help for landlords to improve their energy efficiency and, where necessary, increase enforcement. In the next few months all landlords with properties with low EPCs will be contacted. Grants will be available for improvements such as loft and cavity wall insulation, more efficient boilers and solar panels

Surgery

We are not (yet) 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 some details 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
