

Report to the parish Council June 2023

Cllr Jill Haynes, Chalk Valley's Ward, Dorset Council

Dear Councillors please find an update of some of the highlights of June.
Best wishes Jill

South West Contact Centre Forum – Contact Centre Awards 2023 – Winners! <https://swccf.co.uk/awards-launch/2023-winners/>

I'm delighted to inform you that following our entry for three categories at this year's contact centre awards we reached the **final for all three** categories, and we **won two**:

- **Best Customer Engagement:** this submission featured our Ukraine Response
- **Contact Centre of the Year – In House:** this submission celebrated all the achievements of customer services team including our central access team, adult access team, out of hours team and rapid response.

The competition at SWCCF is a mix of public and private sector. The private sector membership being much more heavily subscribed to the forum than public sector, so we were up against companies like EE, Ageas, UCAS, RAC, Stannah Lifts and many more

The [Customer Services](#) team offer support over the telephone, webchat, email, social media channels, SignVideo and at face-to-face Customer Access points. They are the 'front door' for Dorset Council, providing support for residents on behalf of over 60 departments across the council.

They also support a huge range of other services, from offering pre-eligibility checks for social care, processing Blue Badge applications, and providing emergency out-of-hours cover, to managing the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, involving the coordination of Welfare Checks, Housing Standard reviews, DBS checks and Host payments

AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR

I am very pleased to let you know that Theresa Leavy, director for children's services, has been named as the Municipal Journal's (MJ) Achievement Awards Corporate Director of the Year. The announcement was made at the MJ Achievement Awards ceremony in London on the 23rd of June.

She was praised in the award entry for the huge amount of work she has done for Dorset children where her vision is that Dorset should be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and families are supported to be the best they can be.

The entry stated that 'Theresa has transformed the look, feel and importantly the performance of children's services by improving outcomes for children, young people and families in or communities.'

Theresa has led Dorset through a period of immense system challenge and change. She has created a strengths-based support and culture where staff are encouraged to champion the interests of children and young people being their advocates in everything we do. Staff and elected members, feel privileged to work with such an inspiring leader, who puts the experience of every child, young person and family at the centre of everything we do.

Thank you, Theresa you are such an inspiration

SEND & DISABILITY – CHILDRENS'SURVEY

PLEASE NOTE – this survey has been extended to the 10th July so still time to get involved!

Parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (aged between 0 and 25 years old) are being asked to complete a survey to find out their experiences of education, health and care services and support over the last 12 months. The results of the survey will help to decide what changes we need to make to the services we provide.

The Parent Carer Forum said: 'Through our partnership with Dorset Council and NHS Dorset we strive for Dorset's children and young people to realise their full potential and be the best they can be.

'The voice of parents and carers is essential, and Dorset Parent Carer Council encourages families to complete this survey. Hearing your individual experience of education, health and care over the last 12 months is vital to the development of Dorset Council and NHS Dorset future plans to improve services and support for our children and young people who are disabled or have additional needs. You have our assurance that your responses will be read and taken into account.'

'I really hope that parents and carers reading this will take ten minutes or so to fill in the survey that will help us understand what those improvements are.'

The survey has been designed to be as easy as possible to complete so most questions are written as statements you agree or disagree with.

The [survey is available to complete on line](#), but families can also ask for a paper version by calling 01305 221066 or emailing familyinfo@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

RECORD NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE HOMES BUILT IN DORSET

Record numbers of affordable homes have been built for Dorset residents in the last financial year as we respond to the huge need for affordable housing.

Working with Registered Provider Housing Associations, a total of 664 new affordable homes, including a range of tenures, such as rented and shared ownership, including houses for local, key workers, were built by Housing Associations, or acquired by the council in the year to March 2023.

This is the highest figure since the unitary authority was created in 2019 and represents a rise of 135 additional houses and flats compared with the 529 created in the year to March 2022. In the year to March 2021, just 301 new affordable homes were built.

SAVE MONEY ON PARKING

With recent rises in some public car parks in busy tourist areas, Dorset Council is urging people to check the cost benefits of its permits.

The cost of its permits has been frozen this year, with the Short Stay and Flexi car park permits offering savings for residents and workers:

SHORT STAY

Two hours parking every day in most of the council's car parks.

Cost: £78 a year

How the savings add up:

If used for 2 hours a week = £1.50 a time.

If used for 2 hours daily = just over 21p a time.

[Apply online for the short stay permit](#)

FLEXI

For residents, businesses and workers. Unlimited parking (or up to two hours in car parks where there is a maximum stay) in the majority of the council's car parks 7 days a week.

Cost: £25 if purchased for a month, or £260 for 12 months, the equivalent of £5 a week for all-day, year-round parking.

[Apply online for the flexi car park permit](#)

While the council has introduced seasonal increases at car parks in busy resort and seafront areas, prices for tickets in other nearby car parks have not increased.

For example, in Weymouth, Governors Lane, Nothe car park and the former council offices car park at North Quay park charges remain unchanged.

[Find all Dorset Council's car parks](#)

COMMUNITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

It's not too late to apply for grants of up to £5000 for a project that brings communities across Dorset together. If you're looking for funding to extend or add value to an existing project or event, or want to kickstart a new initiative that will make a difference for people in your community, time is running out to apply.

Round 5 of the [Community and Culture Project Fund](#) will close on Sunday 7 July. You can find out more about eligibility, and how to apply on the [Dorset Council website](#).

DORSET INNOVATION PARK

Astral Systems is the newest business to land on the Dorset Innovation Park. Astral has invented a

new reactor which has the potential to make a huge difference to cancer diagnosis and treatment.

[Dorset company set to make waves in the world of nuclear medicine and cancer treatment - Dorset Council news](#)

FREE STUFF FOR KIDS DURING SUMMER HOLS!

Please find [a link to an article](#) regarding the launch of the 2023 children's Summer Reading Challenge by our Libraries Service.