

Cllr's Christopher's E-mailed Report – 24 October 2021

In the period since the last formal meeting many things have occurred nationally and locally that we need to reflect on including the tragic killing of Sir David Amess MP and the death of James Brokenshire MP. and indeed comments made in the last few days by Lord Field of Birkenhead who was MP for Birkenhead for just over 40 years

I will speak about the 2 Members of Parliament and indeed Lord Field on Tuesday.

1 COVID

With respect to COVID I thought it would be helpful to update you all on Dorset's current position with COVID and the arrangements that are in place to manage it.

The current situation

The number of COVID cases has risen sharply over the past week in Dorset and across the Southwest. Highest infection rates are seen in school age children, with transmission then moving to parents and older people.

The current case rate for Dorset Council is 522 per 100,000 of the population, and in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole it is 420. The rate for England is 447.9 per 100,000 and for the Southwest it's 580.7. There are now 57 people in local hospitals with COVID. There is significant pressure on local hospitals and across the local health and care system.

What is being done about it?

The national programme led by Government is focused on the roll out of booster vaccinations for those in the older and more vulnerable categories, and first vaccinations for children aged 12-15.

Locally Dorset Council are encouraging people to keep windows open for ventilation, to meet outdoors where possible, and to do twice weekly lateral flow tests .

Whilst the highest case rates are amongst school-aged children, cases are increasing across all age groups. Directors of Public Health in the South West have written to schools to provide guidance around some additional measures to prevent the spread of the virus in schools. This includes reducing large gatherings and mixing between year groups as well as encouraging the use of face coverings when moving around in indoor spaces.

Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health for Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council, said:

"During the spring and early summer period we managed to get cases right down, but unfortunately that's not where we are right now. We do need to learn to live with COVID-19, but such high transmission rates do bring increased risks, despite the success of the vaccination programme. The vaccine gives you good protection against serious illness, but it doesn't stop you from catching or spreading the virus. It is not a magic protective cloak, and that's why we need to keep up some other measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

"We have already seen hospital admissions start to rise, and we cannot run the risk of putting additional pressure on our health and care system this winter as we just don't have the room for manoeuvre. That's why we're asking Dorset residents to do three things now:

KNOW that your level of personal risk is changing – as cases rise, you have a greater chance of mixing with someone who is infectious

ACT by taking measures to prevent airborne spread – meet outdoors wherever you can but if you do meet indoors keep windows and doors open and bring extra layers if you need to

PROTECT yourself and others – do twice weekly lateral flow tests to catch the virus early, and if you're not yet vaccinated, now is the time to get your jabs.

"If we all work together now, as we have done throughout the pandemic, we can take action to bring cases back down and hopefully prevent the need for any further restrictions in the coming weeks and months."

2 COUNCIL FINANCES

Both the Budget and the Spending Review take place on Wednesday 27 October 2021.

The Local Government Association has been pushing for the powers and resources that councils need to enable their communities to flourish.

That above praise highlighted by LGA chairman James Jamieson would be echoed by many who seek to improve safe cycling between Chideock and Bridport. I continue to keep up the pressure on Dorset Council portfolio holder Councillor Ray Bryan and liaise with interested parties in and around Chideock.

3 POLLUTION

Since the last meeting of Chideock Parish Council I have received an e mail from Graham Duggan Head of Community and Public Protection at Dorset Council.

The text was as follows

I have discussed this with the service manager and air quality officer. Their view is that a meeting is best to take place mid-January 2022 when the results of the consultation on the Council's Draft Air Quality Action Plan will be available.

I appreciate that this is some weeks away but it is felt that this will enable the meeting to be most productive.

Let me know if this is acceptable and I will send a couple of date options

I look forward to discussing the response from Mr Graham Duggan with members of Chideock Parish Council.

4 PLATINUM JUBILEE

I have also received a response from Matt Prosser ,Chief Executive of Dorset Council in response to my question in respect of the 2022 Jubilee celebrations for HM Queen Elizabeth 2, our sovereign and defender of the faith.

The response was as follows:

Dear Cllr Christopher

There are a number of officers across Dorset Council working to support and prepare for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, from links with our Lord Lieutenant who is arranging formal services in conjunction with Dorset Council, to mark the occasion through to supporting the national Queen's Canopy project to plant trees across the UK.

We are also linking with DAPTC to provide practical support to those towns and parishes wanting to host local events and needing to apply for street closures or additional waste and recycling services.

I have asked the various teams for an update which I will collate in due course and circulate to members. I am also in contact with the Lord Lieutenant to understand any further requests coming from Her Majesty's team.

5 CABINET RESHUFFLE

Again , I look forward to receiving your thoughts.

While Councillor Ray Bryan continues in post as portfolio holder for Highways there has been a number of changes amongst other portfolio holders.

Cllr Spencer Flower, Leader of Dorset Council, has made the changes outlined below to his Cabinet as a mid-year reshuffle. All changes were in effect from Monday 18 October.

Cabinet:

- 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

6 ADULT SOCIAL CARE

You have heard many times that Adult Social Care is by far the largest item in terms of expenditure within the Dorset Council Budget.

As we approach the Winter I thought I would pass on some comments re care and the demand for carers.

The number of requests for help with finding home care are growing daily at #HelpAndKindness.

The #HelpAndKindness project “joins the dots” between residents’ needs, and providers of support across Dorset. Requests are received from residents, public sector partners and from the commercial sector. They are increasingly asking for local support for people at home.

In addition to sharing details of local care agencies, #HelpAndKindness is also signposting to independent, self-employed providers who work in the community. These Micro-Providers of care and wellbeing services are a growing resource in Dorset. They can provide all kinds of support, excluding personal care and complement the vital, professional care services offered by larger agencies.

Dorset Council, Community Catalysts and #HelpAndKindness have been working on a pathway to support people to set up these Micro care businesses. This includes offering advice, training, and support in promoting their work. Micros work within a voluntary quality framework called “Doing It Right” and are supported to provide high quality services. It’s really important that people are supported to live as independently as possible in their own homes and this work helps this to happen.

The past month has seen over thirty new enquiries to set up Micro Care businesses.

Further work is under way at #HelpAndKindness, who are working with local providers, the local authority, NHS and other partners, to look at these issues, and find creative and agile ways to strengthen Dorset’s capacity to care for people at home.

The care crisis is upon us, and we believe it's through this kind of collective action that we can find a way to tackle the challenges, and continue to meet the needs of people across Dorset.

For more information on Community Care micro-providers visit

www.helpandkindness.co.uk/the-micro-providers-network

or for other information regarding adult social care visit www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/adult-social-care.

7 SOUTH WALKS HOUSE

Dorset Council has entered into a short-term lease of South Walks House, the former main offices of the old West Dorset District Council at the time of LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) to Dorset County Hospital for use by their musculoskeletal unit, to reduce waiting lists.

This lease is for 6 months only from the start of November, and Dorset Council are pleased to be able to support our NHS partner in this way.

However, this arrangement does not affect our long-term planning for South Walks House. A paper will be brought to the December Cabinet meeting with options and proposals for the long-term use of the building, as planned.

8 OTHER POINTS

The **Dorset Local Access Forum** are looking for people who want to improve Dorset's paths and open spaces for local people and visitors.

The Dorset Local Access Forum (DLAF) considers all the issues relating to the county's Public Rights of Way and public green spaces. They find solutions to matters such as the coast path being lost to erosion, the need for safe vehicle-free routes for walking, cycling and horse-riding, the maintenance and improvement work that is sensitive to the paths character & landscape and how to help people to walk and ride and not use vehicles for local trips.

The forum is looking for people to be part of this team. Anyone can apply to join the DLAF – all you need is commitment, enthusiasm, and experience of using; helping provide or of the wider issues that could be benefited by improved countryside access. That could be:

- Someone who enjoys walking, horse-riding, cycling, responsible vehicular driving or other outdoor activities, or who uses the county's rights of way to travel sustainably around their local area
- An owner, occupier and/or manager of land – especially with open access or Public Rights of Way
- Someone involved with matters such as health, environment, planning, tourism, the economy where improved paths and green space could bring additional public benefits.

The forum is an independent, statutory body providing advice to various organisations, including councils, AONBs, English Heritage, the Forestry Commission, Defra, and Natural England, as well as any members of the public who request it.

Councillor Noc Lacey-Clarke, Cabinet Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours at Dorset Council, said

"The Dorset Local Access Forum is an opportunity to bring together a diverse mix of people of all ages and expertise to provide fresh, creative and challenging ideas and advice on how to improve and develop paths and countryside access sites in Dorset. Its members shape the Forum and its work.

"This last year has highlighted the very important role that Dorset's public rights of way and greenspace plays in people's lives, health and to get outside into the fresh air. At times this has also presented new challenges and opportunities to learn. The

forum exists to help make Dorset more accessible and enjoyable for everyone, both now and in the future.”

Apply to join the DLAF The deadline to apply is 7 November 2021

For more information on the role and work of the DLAF contact Tara Hansford, Strategic Outdoor Access Development Coordinator tara.hansford@dorsetcouncil.co.uk Tel: 01305 221779

I have received many e mails from residents ranging from issues as diverse as discharge of sewerage into the sea and the Environment Bill to concerns re buses

I met on Friday 22 October with a main board director of a significant housing association re concerns about established housing stock. I have also met with some local volunteers assisting financially challenged residents with food

I have challenged Dorset Councillors Ray Bryan and Noc Lacey Clarke on transport matters

I would point out that amongst the changes to lead members who support portfolio holders Dorset Councillor Simon Gibson has replaced Dorset Councillor Cherry Brooks as the lead member responsible for highways surfaces

This has been a non-standard but I feel necessary interim report

I look forward to meeting with you on Tuesday

Best regards

Simon

Councillor Simon Christopher

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