

Cllr Christopher's E-mailed Report – 21 February 2022

Highways received reports of over 450 fallen trees and responded to these.

Dorset Police have praised the response from both unitary authorities, including tree and highway clearance, and customer services.

I look forward to the up/update meeting with yourselves and National Highways i.e. their route manager Ben Hampson, On 24 February.

I look forward to the meeting on 26 February to discuss the much needed All- weather/All-purpose trail so allowing for a safe, traffic free route, east of Chideock.

It is good to see so many events at local village halls. Now for some really important thoughts that concern mental health and community events:

It is I believe ,very important to reflect on, and act on, the impact of Covid on mental health. Age UK conducted a survey of what the Charity described as older people, being people aged over 60. Some 27 per cent of people said they speak less to their family now.

The Charity reports that millions have lost the confidence to go out and 41 per cent described feeling lonely. Memory loss disturbed sleep and anxiety are some of the symptoms being reported by older people in what Age UK has called an "alarming" mental health crisis The Charity is urging friends and family of older people, to what it describes as "reach out for a chat. Good mental health of residents of Dorset is good news for the NHS and Dorset Council. It is no wonder that I am a keen supporter of our local halls, community shops , faith groups, clubs, and societies . My work also encompasses lobbying for better public transport, road and rail for the benefits that can be derived for the residents of the Marshwood Vale ward. My lobbying also continues for better pavement provision ,reduced and indeed consistent speed limits .

Latest updates on COVID-19 in Dorset, Published: 18 February 2022

This week's overview

We have continued to see a fall in confirmed case rates in the Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council areas over the past week. There have been changes to testing behaviour in recent weeks due to policy changes so we continue to use a range of data to understand and respond to the pandemic. There are now over 100 people in Dorset hospitals with COVID-19.

There are still plenty of opportunities to get vaccinated in Dorset, visit [COVID-19 vaccinations in Dorset – NHS Dorset CCG](#) for more information. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from serious illness caused by COVID-19.

Latest data summary

Summary of the most recent data:

- 7-day case rates per 100,000
 - BCP: 747.1 (compared to 919.4 in last update on 11 February)
 - Dorset: 699.3 (compared to 884.2 in last update on 11 February)
- Confirmed cases in last 7 days
 - BCP: 2,966 (compared to 3,650 in last update on 11 February)
 - Dorset: 2,656 (compared to 3,358 in last update on 11 February)
- Current COVID-19 patients in hospital beds in Dorset: 103 (compared to 92 in last update on 11 February)

Dorset Council Budget.

We have increased our budget for the 2022-23 financial year to £331.6 million, from £312.4 million the previous year. The annual budget pays for all the services the council provides to residents, communities, and businesses.

Council budget approved

The council's budget for next financial year (2022-23) was approved at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday this week.

This budget includes:

- a 10% increase for adult social care – to fund the rising need for social care in the local population and the rising costs of providing this care
- a 4% increase for children's services – to fund improvements to support children in care and children with special educational needs and disabilities
- £10m capital investment over the next 5 years to help fund the delivery of the council's climate and ecological emergency action plan
- an extra £0.75 million for housing to support the development of more new homes with our Registered Providers and the supply of better value temporary accommodation from the private rented sector.

Council tax will increase by just under 3%, of which 1% is the adult social care precept. This is equivalent to £1.02 extra per week for a Band D property.

Impact of COVID-19

Like most councils across the country, we faced significant financial pressure due to extra expenditure related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included support for vulnerable residents through a range of services such as adult social care, housing, and mental health. We also incurred extra expenditure on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-secure arrangements.

The financial impact of the pandemic continues. For example, when people who have been seriously ill due to COVID-19 are discharged from hospital, they often require support from us, with adaptations to their home, occupational therapy, and adult social care.

Local communities asked to highlight their local heritage

Residents across the whole of Dorset will now be able to nominate locally important buildings, structures, designed landscapes, sites and places to be considered on new Local Heritage Lists.

The idea is to make it easy for everyone to nominate and celebrate the heritage that is important to their local area. Dorset's economy relies on the historic towns, seaside resorts, villages, and landscapes to draw hundreds of thousands of tourists every year – this heritage is a big part of what makes our county so special.

This is a joint project between Dorset Council and BCP Council using a grant of £70,000, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Local Heritage Lists will provide a free publicly accessible record of non-designated heritage assets, whose conservation will then be a material consideration in planning decisions.

Land Use Consultants (LUC), working on behalf of the councils, will consider the public nominations using a set of criteria to create a baseline Local Heritage List for each authority. These will be regularly updated with new additions in the future, with the records of all assets being added to Dorset's Historic Environment Record.

Cllr David Walsh, Dorset Council's Portfolio holder for Planning, said:

“It is very important that we help to promote and protect local heritage and forge stronger connections between people and their local areas.

“And no one knows the area better than local people, so it is vital that everyone is able to add to our Local Heritage List.

“I encourage everyone to nominate the local heritage they love and wish to be preserved in their local areas.”

I understand that following Mr Daryl Turner moving to Wales, the Dorset Councillor Lyme Regis and Charmouth ward by election will be held on 7 April 2022

Best regards

Simon

Councillor Simon Christopher

Dorset Councillor Marshwood Vale

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