

Cllr Christopher's E-mailed Report – 28 November 2022

I will be at County Hall on Tuesday and unable to join you for your November meeting.

It was good to meet with many of you at the Christmas Fair on Saturday.

I attended a meeting with National Highways at Kilmington, re the A35 in Devon and Dorset. The meeting was attended by councillors George and Anna Dunn, it had a focus on safety and speed. I was left with the clear impression that we would hear further from National Highways with their thoughts on speed limits and other safety issues in the coming months. It is envisaged that there will be a further meeting involving parishes blighted by traffic.

Una and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a happy Christmas.

Local Government Reorganisation Savings

	Annual Efficiency and transformational saving £'000
2019/20	17,200
2020/21	14,400
2021/22	27,786
2022/23	17,259
Total	76,645

Christmas Bin collection

The revised dates for bin collection vary across the county. To find out what is yours go to the Dorset website check your bin, put in your postcode and you should get an answer! However, in general, the usual collection services will be delayed by a day from December 26 until December 30. For example, rubbish collection on Monday, December 26 will now be taken on Tuesday, December 27 etc. This will remain in place throughout the week until normal service resumes on Monday, January 2. You can keep track of what bin needs to be put out when by visiting dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/check-your-bin-day.

Community grants – Round 4 of funding

Dorset Council project funding can help you to make a difference to people living in our communities. The fund is a small project grant, funding up to 80% of total project costs. We are open to all applications that [meet our criteria](#). We offer grants from £1,000 to £5,000 to support the council to [meet its core priorities](#). In round 4 Cultural applicants can apply for projects that meet the council's cultural outcomes and priorities. Cultural applicants can be considered for a cost-of-living project grant but can only submit one application in this round.

Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) groups can apply in this round. However, applicants should note that round 4 will prioritise applications from the VCS that support the cost-of-living challenges that affect local communities. You can find out more about Dorset communities [from the Dorset Insight Page](#). Dorset council is committed [to projects benefitting marginalised people](#).

As we expect demand for funding to be very high, we may award applicants less than they apply for.

Applications from Voluntary and Community sector organisations who are seeking a grant to support local community projects can still apply but we will prioritise grants to those projects that address and support the

cost-of-living challenges for vulnerable communities and those most in need in the Dorset council area. Details of the types of cost-of-living projects that can be considered will focus on:

- community warm rooms/spaces especially those in rural areas
- community food projects including lunch clubs, dinner clubs and community meals
- foodbanks including community fridges
- low level Mental Health projects

Schools Admissions

Dorset are running the annual consultation on the School Admission Arrangements 2024/2025 with effect from Monday 7th November 2022 to Sunday 18th December 2022. Details of the consultation will be available to view at [2024 to 2025 school admission policies - Dorset Council](#).

Responses must be submitted either in writing to School Admissions Team, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ or by email to schoolorganisation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by Sunday 18th December 2022. Upon the conclusion of the consultation period all responses will be considered carefully, and a report will be presented to Dorset Council's Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 28th February 2023.

The timetable for the consultation is set out below:

Dorset LA consultation begins	7th November 2022
Dorset LA consultation ends	18th December 2022
Own Admission Authorities (including Dorset LA) determine Admission Arrangements	28th February 2023
Own Admission Authorities (including Dorset LA) publish Admission Arrangements	15th March 2023
Deadline for Objections to Office of the School's Adjudicator	15th May 2023

Helping vulnerable women

A project which will help vulnerable women in Dorset has come one step closer to realisation. Dorset Council has appointed BCHA, a charitable housing association based in the southwest, to lead the Pause Programme. Pause is a nationally evaluated programme which works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in their children needing to be removed from their care. The programme aims to give women the opportunity to pause and take control of their lives, breaking a destructive cycle that causes both them and their children deep trauma. It supports them to develop new skills and responses that can help them create a more positive future.

Net Zero Target

The local authority published its third Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Progress Report outlining progress towards reducing carbon emissions. Since introducing their strategy in 2019, the carbon footprint of the council has reduced by 26 per cent and current data indicates we are on track to achieve their interim target of reducing council emissions by 40 per cent by 2025.

Rough Sleepers

Dorset Council has successfully secured more than £1.5 million to help continue excellent work supporting rough sleepers. As well as continuing to support existing projects, such as the Bus Shelter and our advice and support services, the additional funding will help establish a new rapid assessment unit for vulnerable people providing accommodation and bespoke assistance to prevent returning to the streets. Spread over

three years the money will also be used to support charities in the community which are set up to help rough sleepers. The funds over such a significant period, will give security to the organisations and their workforces.

Library Consultation

Now in the second phase of consultation, communities are being asked for their views on the draft strategy, to help prioritise and explore what the library service could look like in their community. In addition to the main survey, there is a dedicated children's survey for ages 5-15 years, this can be completed on behalf of children who you care for. To find all our surveys head to: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/lets-talk-libraries. Support is also available via customer services where an officer can help to fill in the survey over the phone. Call 01305 221 000. Those who need paper copies of the survey can access these by visiting their [local library](#). The survey will close on 22 December 2022.

Land Charges

Dorset Council has announced the time taken to complete land charge search requests is back down to 10 working days. A year ago, the average time to return these searches had risen to 62 days which was holding up the sale of properties and in some cases led to the collapse of some sales.

Gritting schedule

Gritting crews are on standby 24/7 across Dorset from now until the end of March ready for action. Up to 22 main gritting routes are treated by Dorset Council's Highways Service when road surface temperatures are predicted to drop below one degree Celsius. The roads form the majority of roads used by the majority of the motorists - covering 684 miles of the council's network. In preparation for the chilly temperatures, the local authority has stockpiled 12,700 tonnes of rock salt in the council's depots.

The precautionary gritting network includes all A, B, and well-used C class roads as well as:

- links to hospitals,
- large industrial estates, transport interchanges, emergency services stations (including manned Coastguard and RNLI) and identified critical infrastructure
- routes to all urban schools with more than 500 pupils and rural schools with more than 350 pupils
- primary bus routes with a substantial frequency
- main routes through towns and villages with populations of more than 750

Homes for Ukraine - Dorset update

Since March 2022: 309 Dorset Sponsors have welcomed 787 Ukrainian Guests to Dorset
As of 23 October 2022: 280 Dorset Sponsors are hosting 720 Ukrainian Guests and
40 Sponsors are waiting to welcome a further 75 Ukrainian Guests

School data as of 10 October 2022:

- We have received 278 applications for school places
- 13 children are in private schools
- 10 children have moved area or returned to the Ukraine
- 242 children are registered on the roll of a Dorset School

Dorset's Homes for Ukraine response is now established as a council service, made up of and integrated with many front-line services, operating the following complex workstreams:

- Main Operational Service

- Re-Matching Support
- Post Six-Month Long-Term Housing and Support
- Unaccompanied Children

I attended a meeting on farm business succession held in the Marshwood Vale Ward and organised by a national farming organisation. This as you can imagine for someone who has helped farmers in a professional capacity was interesting and thought provoking. In the same way it is noteworthy that DEFRA's Lump Sum Exit scheme has attracted the attention of many farmers especially those farming small acreages fuelling fears about consolidation in the farming industry. We are also seeing proposals for the reform of farm tenancy arrangements which could well impact on County Farm Estate tenants and farmers generally.

I have received communications in respect of dog/litter bins and the price of fuel and in particular the differential between petrol and diesel prices with these high prices being an issue for individuals.

Clearly, I attend many meetings whether connected to education, or the Royal British Legion, with farmers and other businesses. Many organisations have to deal with similar issues whether risk assessments, health, and safety generally and other compliance costs.

A common complaint is that the requirements placed on individuals and indeed businesses are more onerous, this annoyance can take many forms whether through removal of the facility to pay for parking by cash or the additional cost of employing labour, with respect to the increase in labour wage inflation but other costs such as auto enrolment and pension costs generally but also the compliance costs in meeting payroll obligations. The latest compliance issue is a consultation whereby employers will have to provide more information on where workers are working as part of their Real Time Information provision.

Clearly additional pressures on employers may lead to reduced work forces, reduced trading activity or ultimately cessation.

Best regards

Simon

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