

Cllr Christopher's E-mailed Report 2.

You may be aware that Hertfordshire Council and others brought a legal action against the Government's decision not to allow parliamentary time to allow legislation for the continuing use of virtual meetings beyond early May 2021. The hearing was held on 21 April and as I write this, we are awaiting the result of the court decision.

Since the last meeting we have seen a major slip of the cliff East of Seatown, and I am sure we are all aware that the slip appears massive and could at a different time could have had devastating loss of life.

With respect to the planning application to erect a side extension at The Old Creamery, Ridwood, where Chideock Parish Council objected on the grounds that the proposed use of render would be unsympathetic to the existing dwelling, I have received a response from the nominated officer for Development Management and Enforcement at

Dorset Council, Anna Lee:

"I am satisfied that under the provisions of Dorset Council's constitution this application can be determined as a delegated decision. I consider that the concerns raised by Councillor Christopher and Chideock Parish Council have been addressed in the officer's report, noting that a similar mix of render has been used on another property in the vicinity. Overall, I consider that this is an appropriate matter to determine under delegated powers."

With the continuing dry weather, it is easy to forget the consequences not least for our farmers with I understand this being the driest April for some 80 years.

There is an appreciation that there are consequences for farmers, for example the amount of water used in dairy farming livestock arable and indeed mixed farming paying more than £2 a cubic metre. Other parish councils often talk of river pollution due to slurry and other waste entering our rivers. I am under the impression that across Dorset that there are increasing numbers of farmers wishing to leave the dairy industry whether conventional or organic dairy farmers choosing to get out of dairying. This may be reflected with the Dorset County farms estate. While the dairy sector plays its role in the presentation of our green and pleasant land, we should remember the safety aspect with accidents on farms across the Country exceeding 50 in the last year. Our local farmers have to cope with restrictions on abattoir availability, the high incidence of TB in cattle and as result of the 2 previous points having animals to cull being left on the farm too long

Despite sheep and beef prices holding up well dairy prices are in the doldrums and the dry weather is set to impact on crop yields. Many farmers have diversified into tourism and one concern is how long Dorset Council's planning team is taking to process applications

I have particular concerns that decisions are consistent, and you may please want to consider whether you have any thoughts on this subject

With respect to the A35 I am expecting statements from specialists around the areas of speed limits impacting of course on safety and the environment and the provision of much needed safe walking and cycling on routes as an alternative to the A35 while extracting commentary from those who specialise in public health.

I look forward to speaking with you at a meeting devoted to A35 issues when I might have received e mails from specialists mentioned above outlining proposals for 'the way forward,

Dorset Councillor Ray Bryan appears to have devoted a considerable amount of his time to safety matters in Weymouth particularly railings by the harbour. The railings have caused an enormous amount of press coverage whether the railings are needed you can judge for yourself. I have made my mind up that they are necessary

I am aware that there is considerable frustration concerning poor mobile phone coverage whether in the remotest parts of the Marshwood Vale Ward or even within parts of Dorchester. You may aware that the Council is using its own waste collection vehicle to monitor mobile phone coverage across Dorset. It is my understanding that The Government is proposing law changes that will allow phone masts to be increased in size in rural areas to improve coverage. It is further my understanding that the proposals are for the mobile phone companies to be allowed to build masts up to 5 metres taller and two metres wider than presently

allowed .There is the desire on the part of H M Government to eliminate 4G not spots as they are termed and to speed up the roll out next generation 5 G networks

There is discussion of a new Green Homes Grant as HM Government looks to meet new carbon targets in particular the new target to reduce emissions by 78 per cent by 2025 when compared with 1990 levels . With more than 800,000 rural homes heated by oil this will be a major challenge as those living off grid are encouraged to move to alternatives such as ground source heat pumps.

The Cabinet of Dorset Council will be considering the future of St Mary's Shaftesbury, this was purchased by the Dorset Council earlier this year. This was then followed by a public consultation around the Councils preferred option for use for Special Educational Needs pupils. The vast majority of the respondents to the survey agreed with the preferred option of Dorset Council. The envisaged daily commute to the school is 45 minutes so my colleagues and I will be looking for appropriate investment in the West of the County eg at Mountjoy, Beaminster

There has been much discussion of the National Bus strategy and the idea that the transport portfolio holders in Councils across the land are charged with the duty to come forward with proposals in the next few weeks, so assisting amongst other things, helping the economy bounce back from the depths of the recession providing an improved service for residents and holiday makers.

I am concerned about the level of road rage as people drive on local lanes and hope people will treat others with respect as Dorset becomes busier during the next few months
Having spoken at length about farming at the start of this report I shortly turn to accommodation and hospitality sectors but before I do, I will comment that Dorset Council has increased some car parking charges with a view to boosting car parking income that collapsed due to lockdown restrictions

In the 12 months to 28 February 2021 whereas GDP across the economy fell by 7.8 per cent across the Country The corresponding figure for accommodation showed a reduction of 73.9 per cent and for food and beverage the reduction in GDP was 51.3 per cent . Clearly every assistance that Dorset can be given to boosting the economy through a successful tourist system will be helpful for the Country's finances and also those of Dorset Council