

## Hedges, Trees and the Highway

The cutting back of highway hedges and trees is the responsibility of the landowner or occupier on whose land the hedges and trees are growing. It is the responsibility of all landowners or occupiers to ensure that their hedges and trees do not interfere with the safe use of public footways and roadways or obscure streetlights and road signs. Dorset County Council as the Highway Authority has a duty to ensure that landowners and occupiers recognize their responsibilities to keep public highways clear of their overgrowing hedges and trees for the benefit of all highway users, whether they are drivers of vehicle, cyclists, equestrians or pedestrians which include pram and wheelchair users, the disabled and the visually impaired.



Rather than wait for complaints about vegetation obstructing highways, the County Council enlists the help of Town and Parish Councils to identify those locations where problems exist so they may seek local co-operation of landowners or occupiers to deal with any offending hedges and trees on an informal basis.

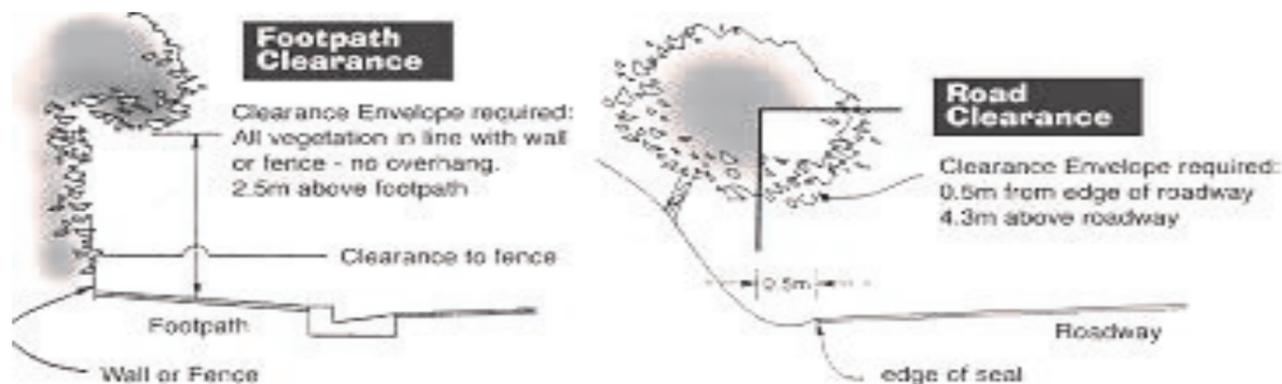
### 'What will happen if I don't cut the vegetation back?'

Should a landowner or occupier's co-operation not be gained, then the Town or Parish Council will inform the County Council's highways department so that formal enforcement action may be considered. The County Council's highway enforcement officer will further seek the co-operation of the landowner or occupier and advise that if the offending vegetation is not cut, then enforcement action will be taken. Where it is not possible to gain voluntary co-operation, a formal notice will be served to cut back the vegetation within 14 days. If after 14 days the work has not been done, then the Authority will arrange to carry out the work and recover the cost of doing so from the landowner or occupier. If in the mean-time an accident happens attributable to the overhanging vegetation, this exposes the owner or occupier responsible for the hedges or trees to a claim from the injured or damaged party which depending on circumstances could be substantial.

### 'I don't think my hedge needs cutting back'

Most disputes about the cutting of highway hedges and trees arise from establishing land ownership. In the majority of cases properties adjacent to public highway include land either to the centre or across the whole width of the highway. This means that any offending hedge or tree (whether it borders or is located within the bounds of highways) will generally be the responsibility of the adjoining property owner or occupier.

Diagrams (see below) provide guidance to help determine the extent to which highways should be kept clear of vegetation. It only takes a single overhanging bramble or branch to inflict serious injury to a person's eye or deflect them into the path of passing vehicle. So please work with us to make our highways a safer place. Care should be taken to avoid damaging or destroying the nests of wild birds while they are either being built or used (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). Safety is paramount.



10.03.2014

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Trevor Chambers

### this issue

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Vacancy & Fingerposts P.2 & 3

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Meeting dates, PCSO report,

Affordable Housing Update P.6 & 7

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## Superfast Broadband is coming to the Char Valley!

Residents and businesses in parts of Char Valley will be the first to benefit from Superfast Dorset's multi-million pound rollout of Superfast Broadband.

Work has started on the first phase of the programme, expected to make the high-speed fibre optic technology available to most properties in Whitchurch Canonorum, Ryall, Wootton Fitzpaine and Monkton Wyld, and some surrounding areas, with the first customers able to take up service in the coming months. Most people in these areas will be able to take up service by autumn 2014.

In other areas, such as in Morcombelake where many properties are connected directly to the exchange, access to the fibre network will be through a different technology to be installed later this year.

There are some areas in Char Valley where existing infrastructure or geography make it very difficult to reach with superfast broadband. The Superfast Dorset project is aware and working very hard to find means to return later in the project with new technologies to connect even more premises to the fibre network.

For residents, faster, more reliable broadband makes staying connected even easier. And as more services move online and reliable broadband becomes essential in every home, it will keep those living in more isolated areas connected who might otherwise be left behind.

The project brings a positive change to the local economy, too. From cost savings to becoming competitive on a global level, to more flexibility for home-working, Superfast Broadband speeds can transform the way we do business in the Char Valley.

Superfast Dorset is enlisting the help of volunteers to be Local Links between the project and their communities. Chris Everidge is a Local Link for Char Valley, and can give you information about the benefits, progress of the project in your area, how to take up the service when it becomes available, and opportunities for people who need help getting online for the first time. Email her at [chriseveridge@gmail.com](mailto:chriseveridge@gmail.com).

By the end of 2016, 95% of Dorset premises will have access to superfast speeds, and all premises will have access to at least 2Mbps. As technologies improve and more resource becomes available, Dorset councils are working with the Government, BT and other infrastructure providers to develop additional plans for those most difficult to reach areas.

To find out whether your business or residence is included in the first phase, to register as a Local Link and find out about upcoming local events, visit [www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast). Keep informed with the latest Superfast Dorset news at [www.dorsetforyou.com/e-news](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/e-news).

The James  
Hargreaves  
Community Hall

In May 2004, over 100 Morcombelakers celebrated an historic event. The event was the acquisition for the first time of their own village hall.

Now, almost exactly 10 years later, the hall has been completely refurbished thanks to grants from DCA, WDDC, our Parish Council and years of fund-raising.

Their story started in 1999 when the United Reformed Church offered the village the chance to buy a run-down hall, disused chapel and graveyard near the green in Morcombelake. With no hall of their own, villagers eagerly seized their chance and in 2004, after hard fund-raising and successful grant applications, they purchased the site.

The hall is now self-funded from the regular use by many user-groups including the Gardening club, Table Tennis, Country Dancing, Art Groups, Scrabble Club, Knit & Natter, Luncheon Club and village lunches.

## Report from Ken Mansbridge, Chairman Char Valley Parish Council

WDDC are cutting back on many things, one of which is the *Lengthsman* scheme. We have managed to work out funding for him without an increase in the precept. We hope he will also take on maintenance of the signposts from which WDDC have also withdrawn funding.

In Whitchurch Canonorum, after some false starts, *Affordable Housing* is going ahead and the first tenants should be installed Sept-Oct.

The unknown at the moment is *Superfast Broadband*. Will you receive it or not - it's a case of wait and see.

I find it very sad that people appear not to take an interest in their community until there is something that affects them personally. Hence we have had a vacancy for a Councillor for Whitchurch Canonorum South for some time now, despite advertising etc. Perhaps it needs a planning application for a traveller site in the village to wake them up and get them to come to meetings!

### Vacancy for a Parish Councillor in the Whitchurch Canonorum South Ward

A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Councillor in the Whitchurch Canonorum South Ward.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please apply in writing to the Parish Clerk at the above address. Applicants must be over 18 years of age and meet at least one of the following criteria

- the applicant owns or rents land or property within the Parish
- his/her principal or only place of work is within the Parish
- he/she lives within 3 miles of the Parish.

All criteria must have applied for at least 12 months.

Clerk: Mr Malcolm Wilson, c/o Hyde Cottage, Blackdown, Nr Beaminster, Dorset DT8 3LE  
e-mail: [clerk@charvalleypc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@charvalleypc.co.uk) Tel: 07718 281942

## Report from PCSO Luke White

The winter just gone has been a busy time for emergency services. The severe bad weather meant an increase in calls due to flooding, fallen trees, road accidents, blocked roads and there was a great deal of partnership working between agencies to keep people safe, minimise disruption and get the county back to normal as soon as possible afterwards.

It was also great to see such a community spirit, with people coming out to help those who had been affected by the weather. Now the warmer weather is upon us we can hopefully look forward to the busier summer season and the influx of visitors who choose to visit our area each year.

Over the past year the overall number of crimes reported in the area has remained level at 256. There have been reductions in reports of antisocial behaviour, and most other crime categories, such as house burglary and criminal damage.

There has unfortunately been a rise in vehicle crime over the past 12 months. This is due to an increase in thefts from vehicles parked at one of our many local beauty spots. It is not safe to leave your valuables such as handbag, wallet or mobile phone hidden in the boot or glove box. Criminals can watch you hide your valuables and then, when you leave your vehicle, smash a window and take the items. Local officers have been regularly patrolling these beauty spots, ensuring signs are in place warning motorists of the risks and engaging with visitors to make sure they take steps to protect their belongings. There are a large number of local residents who use these beauty spots as well as visitors to the area, and we encourage people to call police on 101 should they see anyone acting suspiciously around our beauty spot car park.

Lyme Regis Safer Neighbourhood Team can be contacted by calling 101. We are also on Facebook (search for Bridport, Beaminster & Lyme Regis Safer Neighbourhood Teams), and Twitter @LymeRegisSNT.

PCSO 5474 Luke White  
Lyme Regis Safer Neighbourhood Team  
Lyme Regis Police Station  
Hill Road  
Lyme Regis  
DT7 3PG  
Tel: 101  
Twitter: @LymeRegisSNT  
Email: [luke.white@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:luke.white@dorset.pnn.police.uk)

## Update on Affordable Housing in Whitchurch Canonorum

Despite the wettest winter for years the contractors, Pemberton Homes, have been making good progress on both sites. The ground has been stripped of topsoil, foundations dug and the buildings themselves have begun to take shape. We are using Porotherm blocks rather than the traditional concrete block as they can be laid higher and quicker than normal. This allows the building envelope to be weatherproof so that the internal works can be started earlier. This should mean a quicker build.

Some of the drainage and soakaways have been installed with the remainder due to go in the ground later on when conditions on and off site allow. The earth that has been excavated and stored at Bluntshay Lane will be removed during the drier weather. This is so that we can minimise the amount of mud that will be tracked out onto the road. The wet weather has meant that the road has been left in a poorer condition than we would have liked so far but this should change with the weather.

The current programme is that the homes will be complete in early September. Our Housing Management team will be advertising the properties about three months before, so anyone in the village who is interested should register on [www.homechoice.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.homechoice.dorsetforyou.com) This is where we will get our information from so if someone is not registered they will miss out.

Our thanks to Peter Friend of Hastoe for this article.

**CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

www.charvalleyipc.co.uk

**MEETING DATES FOR 2014**

DATE	VENUE	TIME
13 <sup>th</sup> January	James Hargreaves Community Hall, Morcombelake	7.30pm
10 <sup>th</sup> February	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	7.30pm
10 <sup>th</sup> March	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	7.30pm
14 <sup>th</sup> April	James Hargreaves Community Hall, Morcombelake	7.30pm
12 <sup>th</sup> May	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall (Annual Parish Council Meeting)	7.30pm
9 <sup>th</sup> June	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	7.30pm
21 <sup>st</sup> July	James Hargreaves Community Hall, Morcombelake	7.30pm
August	No Meeting	
8 <sup>th</sup> September	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	7.30pm
13 <sup>th</sup> October	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	7.30pm
17 <sup>th</sup> November	James Hargreaves Community Hall, Morcombelake	7.30pm
December	No Meeting	

\* All Meetings take place on a Monday Evening

\* Parish Meetings to be discussed / arranged January / February

\* All Planning & Finance Meetings to be arranged as and when necessary

Members of the public and press are cordially invited to attend all meetings of the Char Valley Parish Councils or its Committees.

## Thank you to Trevor and Liz

Debby Snook

Ever since the Char Chat was started in March 2003, Trevor Chambers and Liz Daros have been joint editors, putting together many editions of Char Chat for the parishioners of the Char Valley Parish Council. The idea for Char Chat came as a result of the Village Plan Appraisal in 2003, and there have been roughly three editions each year.

The committee, made up of some members of the parish council and Trevor and Liz have met before each edition to decide what current topics to include and also to give updates on the village halls at Wootton Fitzpaine, Whitchurch Canonorum and James Hargreaves Community Hall. They have covered a variety of topics - superfast broadband, affordable housing, pollution in the river Char, roadside verges, protocol for planning applications to mention but a few. Together with an annual parish council report from the chairman and introductions to new councillors, it is a means of keeping local people informed of events that are taking place within the parishes.

The exit of the old means the entrance of the new. This year, Trevor and Liz have decided it is time to stand aside and make room for new editors. As well as an expression of great thanks and gratitude to Trevor and Liz for all their hard work over the last eleven years, this is also a request for two new editors to take their place. It is a fun, creative, worthwhile and community minded role.

Please contact our temporary clerk, Malcolm Wilson at [clerk@charvalleyipc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@charvalleyipc.co.uk). Trevor or Liz would be delighted to give you further information.

Trevor can be contacted on 01297 489349



Liz on 01297 560459



## Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2014

## The Way Ahead



### CVPC Summary Receipts / Payments 20/20

Receipts	20 / 20
Precept	£18,000.00
Bank Interest	£7.39
Other income	£42.86
VAT Refund	£209.41
Grants	£0.00
Increase in petty cash	£25.95
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>£18,285.61</b>

### Payments

<b>General Administration</b>	
Clerk	£5,276.13
Insurance	£1,061.37
Office Expenses and equipment	£187.89

<b>Agency Service</b>	
Playing fields and grounds	£787.00
Audit	£100.00
Lengthsman	£2,000.00

<b>Section 137 Payments</b>	£1,125.00
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<b>Capital Spending</b>	
Notice Boards	£600.00
Village Improvements	£131.50
Annual Hall Maintenance	£0.00
Hall Grants	£1,050.00

<b>Running Costs</b>	
Village Hall Hire	£199.50
Burial Grounds	£985.00
DAPTC Membership	£334.52
CPRE Membership	£29.00
WATAG Membership	£0.00
Councillor/Clerk Training / Membership	£50.00
Councilor Expenses	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£0.00
Village Plan	£0.00
Website	£740.00
Char Chat	£263.50
Project / Survey	£7.80
Ordnance Survey	£0.00

<b>TOTAL before VAT</b>	<b>£14,928.21</b>
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<b>VAT TOTAL</b>	<b>£108.48</b>
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<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>£15,036.69</b>
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Local fingerposts are vital to everyone just to get through the maze of lanes and safely to your destination. This is especially true for West Dorset's tourist industry.

Despite this, the County Council has decided that it won't maintain them. Instead it will be left to local parish councils, other concerned groups or individuals to prevent them decaying.

Luckily Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is leading a countywide project to restore them and has been working with community groups, residents and businesses to help them refurbish our fingerposts to ensure that they are conserved now and into the future. The project uses high quality, locally-sourced traditional materials so that we don't lose those wonderful old names.

Despite its refusal to maintain the fingerposts, Dorset County Council demands that they retain ownership of the posts and that all works must be to its set standards!

## Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act 2011 allows communities to prepare their own planning policy documents. By producing a Neighbourhood Plan, local people can shape development in their area and have a say in where and how new homes and businesses will be built.

Neighbourhood planning provides a genuine opportunity for local people to influence the future of their area. These powers have been granted through the Localism Act [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted)

and the Regulations [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made)

Neighbourhood Plans can be as simple, or as detailed, as local people want, provided that they are in line with National Planning Policy, and the strategic policies for the wider area set out in the adopted Local Plan. They are also expected to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. They can cover one or many issues, include planning policies setting out criteria against which planning applications will be judged, and identify places where houses or other buildings can be built.

When adopted, they become part of the statutory development plan. This means they will sit alongside the Local Plan and planning applications for development in the neighbourhood plan area will be assessed against its policies. It will be the first thing considered in deciding whether or not planning permission should be given.

Neighbourhood Plans do not automatically grant planning permission. However, a neighbourhood development order or community right to build order can be used to define 'permitted development' on a particular site.

In those cases, developers will not need to apply for permission.

Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan ([www.cernevalley.org](http://www.cernevalley.org)) is the first one in Dorset to be submitted for examination. This plan has identified where small scale housing development could take place, has a policy on the conversion of historic farm buildings, safeguards a site for a new school, and identifies green spaces and community facilities which will be

protected. It also identifies new facilities they would like to add to existing community facilities e.g. cycle path, village centre parking, speed restriction measure that could be funded through monies generated from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The community infrastructure levy (CIL) is a financial levy placed on developers of new market housing to fund community infrastructure. Communities who have prepared a Neighbourhood Plan receive a greater proportion of CIL, 25% rather than 15%, to spend on the community facilities they need.

Neighbourhood Plans are not compulsory and not everywhere will need to have one, particularly if there is not much development being planned, or if the community do not want to take the lead in shaping the development that may happen. Where there is no neighbourhood plan, decisions will still be guided by the area's Local Plan.

The Parish Council takes the lead in preparing the plan. However, it needs plenty of community support to develop ideas, gather evidence, write policies, and consult at various stages of the process.

Once a plan is drafted it is subject to formal consultation, an examination by an independent examiner, and eventually a referendum to ensure it truly reflects what local people want for their area.

The Local Planning Authority will support the Parish Council and are also involved at key stages of the process, such as approving the neighbourhood area within which the Neighbourhood Plan will have effect, carrying out consultation on the submitted plan, and organizing the independent examination and referendum.

**Neighbourhood Plan –the view of the Char Valley Parish Council.**

The Parish Council policy initially was not to develop a Plan. The Council noted and accepted that a lot of support, community involvement and hard work would be involved, and given the difficulties of even updating the Parish Plan, the support of Char Valley residents would have to both substantial and evident. Indeed the WDDC Local Plan might afford sufficient protection. An approach has been made from Charmouth PC asking if Char Valley Parish Council wished to be linked with its Plan. Although deemed premature, the prospect of a liaison has caused the Parish Council to reconsider its position and hence welcomes input from those in Wootton Whitchurch and Stanton willing to be actively involved. Interested parties should contact Malcolm Wilson, Clerk.

## Reduction in Funding for the Lengthsman Scheme

Since June 2010 Upper Marshwood Vale and Char Valley Parish Councils have used the services of a Lengthsman. The Lengthsman is a person dedicated to maintaining our lanes, drains and verges, checking all grit bins regularly, and other tasks. Upper Marshwood was the lead parish, followed by Char Valley in setting up the scheme.

Before April 2013, Dorset County Council contributed £10,000 per annum and each Parish Council budgeted £2,000 per annum towards the costs of the scheme.

However, funding from DCC for the Lengthsman Scheme was *halved* during 2013/14 financial year but notice of the change came in too late for CVPC to make allowances in its budget. As from April 2014 funding from DCC will *cease*.

The joint Marshwood/Char Valley Lengthsman scheme is considered the best in Dorset as a result of its good record keeping and of work that has reduced DCC's costs.

CVPC is *unanimous* in wanting the scheme to continue but estimates that to continue with it on the basis of one day per week will require an addition to the budget of £5,200 for the next financial year. This would usually mean increasing Council Tax but CVPC have managed to work out funding for him without an increase in the precept

DCC is trying to put in place a Community Action Group (CAG) which involves a group of volunteers from the community undertaking training and carrying out the work. CVPC believes this to be unrealistic and that if there is no Lengthsman Scheme or CAG in place, the responsibility for these works will return to DCC with implied costs.

CVPC has asked for a financial contribution from DCC and a response in writing from their legal department.

## DCC re-structuring and Rights of Way network in Stanton St Gabriel

As a result of re-structuring within DCC, the 'Coast Team' of Demelza Hyde and Adam Butcher now has responsibility for the Rights of Way network in Stanton St Gabriel.

They have skills and knowledge in conservation and land management that they aim to use in partnership with the parish to the benefit of the environment and local communities.

Demelza and Bruce are keen to work with members of the community and welcome input.

Their address is:-

Countryside Ranger  
West & Weymouth &  
Portland Coast  
Dorset Countryside  
The Old Radio Station  
Bridport Road  
Dorchester  
DT2 9FT