

Dorset Council Report August 2024

We hope that you find the following report interesting and informative - please do circulate with your networks.

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Local Notes

Protests/disorder

At the recent Dorset Local Resilience Forum Governance Group, Assistant Chief Constable Steve Lyne took the opportunity to thank the agencies who supported the police in connection with the recent disorder in Weymouth. He also gave a reminder of the need to keep communications open and not to assume that intelligence we are aware of is also known to the police.

If you become aware of information that you believe the police should know about then please send it to force-intelligence-bureau@Dorset.PNN.Police.uk. The police would rather know about the same concern from several different sources than not at all.

Planning - Stronger Voice for Parish Councils

Until recently, if a Dorset Council ward member submitted a representation or a parish or town council submitted a representation contrary to the planning officer's proposed recommendation, a nominated officer decided, in consultation with the relevant planning committee chair, vice-chair and ward member(s) whether the application should be referred to the planning committee (instead of the application being decided by an officer with delegated powers).

To give ward members and parish and town councils a stronger voice in triggering the referral of an application to a planning committee, changes have been made to the Officer Scheme of Delegation. Now, all applications for major development to which a Dorset Council ward member or a town or parish council submits a representation which is contrary to the officer's proposed recommendation will be referred to planning committee for decision.

For other developments not already subject to an automatic committee referral, where a Dorset Council ward member or a parish or town council has made a representation contrary to the officer's proposed recommendation, the decision to refer an application to committee will rest with the relevant planning committee chair and/or vice chair, in consultation with the relevant ward member(s).

Bids for community project grants now open.

Community groups that are looking to make a difference and need some capital investments are reminded of a local funding source.

The latest round of the [Capital Leverage Fund](#) (Round 5) remains open and welcomes applications for projects which will provide new and improved facilities for communities and residents in the Dorset council area.

The grants can help with funding towards a diverse range of projects, including village hall or community building enhancements, renovations, adaptations, or new build projects, including car parks, play areas, multi-use games areas, theatres, community sports clubs, sports pitches, and landscaping.

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/bids-for-community-project-grants-now-open>

Useful contacts for residents:

Report a missed bin [Missed bin collection - Dorset Council](#)

Reporting road issues [Verges, trees and hedges - Dorset Council](#)

Cost of living support [Cost of living help - Dorset Council](#)

News from Dorset Council

Standing against hate, our response to recent acts of racism and bigotry

"Following the disturbances that have been taking place up and down the country, including the protests in Weymouth on Sunday, we deplore the acts of racism and hatred that have unfolded. They are a stark reminder of the work still needed to push bigotry out of our society forever.

"We want Dorset to continue to be a place that celebrates and welcomes people from all walks of life, both those who live here, and those who visit our beautiful county. We are proud of the diversity of our communities, bringing together many different cultures, traditions, and histories. It is this diversity that makes us stronger, more resilient, and more vibrant.

"We would like to express our thanks to the police officers and other emergency services, including those from Dorset, who have supported communities across the country in dealing with these terrifying scenes. In Dorset in particular, thank you to everyone involved, from many organisations, to ensure the safety of our residents over the past week and especially during the protests here on Sunday.

"We have stood together to protect and support one another before, none more so than during the COVID-19 pandemic when communities united, and we must continue to do so.

"In these difficult times, we must renew our commitment to stand together against hate. We must support each other and continue to build a community where every individual, regardless of their background, can feel valued and respected. We must make sure that Dorset remains a place of peace, hope, tolerance and unity.

"We do not accept any form of bigotry in Dorset. Our communities thrive on mutual respect, understanding, and inclusivity. It is these shared values that bind us together.

"We are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment, where everyone can live without fear of discrimination or violence. It is imperative that all hate crime is reported. Advice on what to look out for and how to report is available on the Dorset Police website at www.dorset.police.uk/hatecrime."

"We want to take this opportunity to reflect, that in an extremely rare sequence of events, three little girls lost their lives. We believe, above all else, that children deserve a world that is kind and hopeful."

Cllr Nick Ireland, Leader of Dorset Council

A Big Conversation – Here to Listen

This summer, Dorset Council is asking residents to help shape its plans and priorities for the next five years.

Two years ago, Dorset Council hosted the 'Sofa Sessions' as a trial where elected members took to several busy locations across Dorset to listen to residents and their concerns.

Now, looking to build on that, we are hosting 'A Big Conversation'.

The aim of 'A Big Conversation' is to create meaningful dialogue with residents and communities, finding out what they want from the council over the next five years. By bringing people together, we can understand the issues, build connections, and create positive change. We want to talk to people from all sectors of our communities to build a solid picture of priorities across the board.

We are running a series of events across Dorset this summer. These will involve Cabinet members and local area councillors, supported by officers, chatting to local residents about the proposed new Council Plan priorities.

The 4 proposed priorities are:

- Communities for all
- Respond to the climate crisis
- Provide high quality housing
- Grow our economy

We are planning to hold eight public sessions for residents, and a further four sessions for town and parish councils.

The locations and times for the resident events are:

- Bridport (Bucky Doo Square), Wednesday 24 July, 10am to 3pm – a successful event, thank you to everyone who took part.
- Dorchester (Food and Arts Festival), Saturday 3 August, 10am to 3pm – another good event.
- Wimborne Minster (Town Square), Friday 16 August, 9am to 2pm
- Portland (Easton Gardens), Saturday 24 August, 10am to 3pm
- Shaftesbury Town Market, Thursday 29 August, 9:30am to 2:30pm
- Wareham (The Quay), Saturday 31 August, 8am to 1pm
- Weymouth (New Bond Street), Saturday 7 September, 10am to 3pm
- Sherborne (Market), Sunday 15 September, 10am to 3pm

The locations and times for the Town/Parish events are:

- Wimborne (Leigh Park), Wednesday 21 August, 4.30pm to 6.30pm
- Bridport (Town Hall), Tuesday 27 Aug, 5pm to 7pm
- Blandford (Durweston Hall), Friday 6 September, 5.30pm to 7.30pm
- Dorchester (United Church - The Main Hall), Thursday 12 September, 5pm to 7pm

Please note these are not for residents, but specifically for Town/Parish councillors/staff

We will also be engaging with residents online. The online engagement platform can be accessed on computers at libraries and there will also be paper copies available at libraries.

We know that there are some areas that have not been included in this round of engagement due to the time restrictions. We wanted to go out much earlier and for a longer period to cover more areas, but due to the general election, this wasn't possible. We will endeavour to cover more areas, particularly those we've not been able to get to this time, in future engagement events.

Residents can also give their thoughts and feedback online. Find out more on the website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/a-big-conversation.

Dorset Council parking permits

Short stay permits can now be used in most Dorset Council car parks for up to three hours a day, increasing from the previous two-hour limit.

At £90 a year for the short stay permit, one weekly three-hour stay averages at just over £1.73 per visit over 52 weeks. For those parking three hours a day, five days a week, the permit reduces costs to just under 35p per three-hour stay.

Two vehicles can be registered per permit, but it can only be used on one vehicle at a time. Read more about the permit here: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/short-stay-car-park-permit>

Dorset's country parks recognised as some of the best in the UK

Five of Dorset Council's country parks and nature sites will be flying a Green Flag this year, after winning the award for another year.

Dorset Council is celebrating after receiving 5 Green Flag Awards; for its Avon Heath Country Park, Stour Meadows, Milldown, Durlston Country Park, and Thorncombe Wood, Black Heath and Hardy's Birthplace sites.

The Green Flag Award is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces and recognises the sites as some of the best in the country.

A huge well done and thank you to the rangers and volunteers who look after these spaces, allowing us to enjoy them all year round.

Read more about the award and the sites that have won it:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/dorset-s-country-parks-recognised-as-some-of-the-best-in-the-uk>.