

## **Roads Maintenance**

As part of our maintenance programme, a number of roads in the area are being given an 'early life intervention' to keep them in good condition. We do this through road preservation, a preventative treatment which stops water ingress and surface deterioration. This prevents more damage that ultimately leads to potholes. Road closures with diversions will be in place during the overnight work, along with parking restrictions where applicable, so please be patient.

### **Potholes**

Dorset Council was given a £2,914,000 slice of the £200 million budget set aside by Chancellor Jeremy Hunt during his Spring Budget, Dorset Council monitors approximately 2,400 miles of road.

### **Parking Fines**

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Leader of Dorset Council recently wrote to the Transport Minister asking them to consider increasing parking fines particularly in rural and seaside areas. Currently they are low in comparison to London and other big city charges - such that holiday makers sometimes abandon their cars and view the 25 fine as worth it. In areas such as Lulworth this has caused severe disruption and has prevented emergency vehicles from getting through.

### **Town and Parish Councillors**

At this time of year Town and Parish Councils are frequently looking for new Councillors to replace those who have retired or moved on. Please consider this valuable and essential work if you could spare some time.

### **Second Homes Council Tax**

Dorset Councillors have been discussing proposals for council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties, in anticipation of the new flexibilities for councils in the forthcoming Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. At that time, it was hoped that the Bill would receive Royal Assent by 1 April 2023. Councillors were due to vote on proposals at a rescheduled Full Council meeting on 30 March in order for the change to be introduced from April 2024, as the council was required to make the decision a year in advance.

However, we now understand from government that there is no likelihood of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill becoming law before the end of March and therefore a decision on this matter could not be taken by Full Council on 30 March as planned. The proposal to introduce council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties continues to be something Dorset Council are keen to explore, following constructive discussions at Overview committee and Cabinet. We will watch the progress of the government's new Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill closely and bring this to Full Council once the legislation has passed.

### **Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme**

Dorset Council, BCP Council and Public Health Dorset have been awarded £4,343,000 by central government to upgrade homes and off-grid households with energy efficiency measures as part of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme.

The HUG scheme will provide energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating via local authority funding, to households in England that are low income, off the gas grid or have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) between D and G. You can find more information about the funding on the gov.uk website.

### **Electric Vehicle charging points**

We aim to provide access to charging points within a 10 minute drive for most residents within 10 years. That's the target set by Dorset Council which has announced 'ambitious plans' to expand the charge points into villages and rural locations across the local authority network. The announcement comes as part of the council's 'Charging Ahead' policy which switches the focus from the county's 'main towns' to supporting households in areas that aren't able to charge electric vehicles at their homes. The plans, which will play a key part in preparing the county for the government's 2050 net-zero target, will see as many as 200 electric vehicle charge points installed in communities across the Dorset Council area over the next three years.

Funding for the new charge points will mostly come from the government's local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) scheme and Mer, a European EV charging company, with additional contributions from the council. If your community could benefit from a ChargePoint, you can suggest possible locations by submitting an online form on our website or by contacting your local town or parish council.

### **School attendance strategy.**

The new strategy, which will be implemented during this year and next, sets out to achieve the best attendance and raise the hopes and ambitions of our children and young people through a community partnership approach. The vision for the new strategy is "attendance is everyone's business" and will be achieved by the community working closely and positively together, and with everybody taking responsibility to support children to be safe in school. Everybody in the community will be able to be involved in making the strategy work, from school staff, parents and carers to local shop owners and GP surgeries.

After thorough consultation the attendance strategy has identified five key priority action areas of work which are:

Consistent Dorset-wide policy and practice

Knowledge sharing and communication

Early identification and targeted intervention

Consistent approach to transition (moving to a new school)

Transport

### **Contacting Us**

We are always available to our residents. Our contact details are below and we are happy to meet in person, over zoom or to discuss your concern on the phone. Peter's email address is [peterwharf@hotmail.com](mailto:peterwharf@hotmail.com) telephone 07986 600799 and Laura's is [cllr.laura.beddow@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.laura.beddow@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) telephone 07814 569563

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