

### **Cabinet Reshuffle**

Sadly, I have stepped down from the roles of Deputy Leader and Cabinet member due to ongoing Long Covid health issues. I hope to return in a while! Laura and I will continue to serve the residents of West Purbeck.

### **Household Support Fund**

The Household Support Fund (HSF) will reopen for applications at 6 June 2023 for low-income households in the Dorset Council area. The support will be in the form of supermarket vouchers. Citizens Advice will be allocating this fund on behalf of Dorset Council and vouchers will be issued to residents who meet the eligibility criteria within 6 – 8 weeks. Dorset Council households will be able to apply if they have an annual household net income of less than £30,000 and savings of less than £16,000 and **not applied** for a previous HSF payment within the last 6 months. Calculations for the annual net income should not include Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance or Child Benefit. Applications are limited to one per household. Funds are limited for each window and the form will close when they have been allocated. The April window opened and closed on the same day, so please get in touch as soon as possible once the form opens. If applicants need help completing the form, they can telephone Customer Services on 01305 221000.

### **Community Grants**

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for projects that bring communities across Dorset together. If you are looking to kickstart a new project that will make a difference for people in your community, round 5 of the Community and Culture Project Fund has now reopened. The grants, which are managed by Dorset Council, welcome applications for projects and events for community, arts, accredited museums, heritage, sport, youth, play and physical activity.

Last year the grants supported a wide range of local projects including arts and crafts, physical activities, sports clubs, warm spaces, foodbanks, lunch clubs and cost of living support for childcare places. Not for profit groups who meet our funding criteria are welcome to apply for the grant, which can fund up to £5,000 towards a project that will have a social impact and support local communities and hard to reach groups.

A total of £54,420 was awarded to heritage, museums, and arts organisations across Dorset last year. In addition, 27 grants worth a total of £64,970 were awarded to voluntary and community organisations that work with disadvantaged, under served and marginalized communities in the Dorset council area.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 7 July and decision letters will be sent to all applicants at the end of July. Application details are on the Dorset Council website.

### **Poole Harbour pollution incident**

This report below may well have been superseded by more up to date information; it was believed correct at the date of publication.

Good progress has continued with the clean-up operation since the Perenco Oil Spill on 26 March. Poole Harbour Commissioners are the lead organisation in the clean-up

operation, which has gone extremely well. So far over 300 bags of oil and contaminated materials have been collected from the beaches as well as 417,000 litres of oil and oily water collected to tankers from Ower Bay. The clean-up and remediation operation will continue at Ower Bay until the contamination has been fully dealt with. Localised impacts to the site required to enable the clean-up have been assessed and considered necessary in order to remove the oil and protect the wider harbour. Natural England (NE) /Environment group is advising on the remediation and recovery plan. NE view is that monitoring of the remediation and recovery of the site will be required for months/years.

Compensation and insurance claims for loss of earnings, and costs associated with the clean-up operation should be submitted to Perenco via:

uk.wytchfarm.claims@uk.perenco.com. The claims process is open and working effectively. Some claims have already been paid. This information has been shared publicly via media releases, on the PHC website, on council social media channels and through newsletters to affected businesses in the area. The process is being monitored through the recovery co-ordinating group's business and finance subgroups. All government agencies have been advised to keep records of their involvement in the incident to help form their claims which will be submitted at the appropriate time.

The latest updates are being posted on the SIFCA website: [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/)

Should anyone see oil on the water, this should be reported to Harbour Control on 01202 440 230 or via: [pooleharbourcommissioners@phc.co.uk](mailto:pooleharbourcommissioners@phc.co.uk). Further Frequently Asked Questions are available to view on the Poole Harbour Commissioners website: [www.phc.co.uk/oil-spill-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/](http://www.phc.co.uk/oil-spill-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/)

### **Foster Carers**

Our foster carers and supported lodgings carers now benefit from an increase to their financial payment of 15 per cent from 1 April with a further increase of 12.43 per cent being added to the allowance part of the payment.

Foster carers play a vital role in Dorset by providing care for children who find themselves in need of a home, through no fault of their own. The uplift in payments will help foster families cover the increasing costs of caring for a child in their home.

### **Recycling Barbecues**

Litter Free Dorset is working with Southern Co-op and W&S Recycling to dismantle and recycle 8,000 disposable barbecues as a reminder of how destructive they can be to the environment. A display of disposable barbecues for sale weighing in at over seven tonnes were taken off the shelves following the devastating heathland fires of 2022 and campaigns from Litter Free Dorset (LFD) and the Urban Heaths Partnership supported by Dorset Council

### **Portland Barge**

Dorset Council and Dorset Police have set out their shared position on the Home Office's plans to house asylum seekers on a barge in Portland Port later this year.

The organisations have questions about the proposal that remain unanswered and continue to seek clarity from the Home Office on plans. Both agencies have statutory responsibilities to ensure minimal impact on local services, should the Home Office's plan go ahead. We are still waiting for answers to questions from the Home Office.

## **Car Parking Machines upgrade**

All our car park and on-street pay and display machines are to be replaced. Replacement of the machines is expected to complete by mid-July, with the new machines offering improved reliability and a consistent user experience.

The machines will provide customers with a range of payment options, including cash, card, Apple Pay, Google Pay, and an online app. Wi-Fi will also be improved in car parks with weak phone signals, ensuring smoother transactions. The payment facilities and display screens will at a height suitable for wheelchair users.

## **Nitrates.**

We have had many questions at to how the nitrates policy affects development. Below is a summary article explaining this.

There are five catchment areas for internationally protected wetland habitats within, or overlapping with, Dorset Council's administrative area where phosphorus and/or nitrogen levels have the potential to adversely affect water quality. Dorset Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that any development it permits will not adversely affect the integrity of any internationally protected site. Therefore, in all affected catchments, new residential development cannot be granted planning permission if it is unable to demonstrate that it is capable of achieving nutrient neutrality.

The catchment areas within Dorset are:

- [Poole Harbour](#) – Nitrogen and Phosphorus nutrient deposition
- [Somerset Levels and Moors](#) - Phosphorus nutrient deposition
- [River Avon](#) – Phosphorus nutrient deposition
- [Chesil and The Fleet](#) – Nitrogen and Phosphorus nutrient deposition
- [River Axe](#) – Phosphorus nutrient deposition

The largest and most significant catchment area affecting Dorset in terms of geographical area and housing applications is Poole Harbour, and Dorset Council has in place an adopted strategy to mitigate the impacts of nitrogen from new residential development. However, the advice from Natural England in September 2022 confirmed that phosphorus is also an issue for Poole Harbour.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is proposing measures which will require improvements to wastewater treatment works which, if enacted, will go a significant way to mitigating phosphorus impacts. However, as drafted, there is a risk that smaller treatment works would not be in scope and so the Leader of Dorset Council has written to the Secretary of State to request that all necessary wastewater treatment works in the Poole Harbour catchment are within scope of the intended improvements, and officers have held subsequent meetings with government departments, Natural England and Wessex Water to look at this further. Government is giving careful consideration to Dorset Council's position and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is anticipated to receive Royal Assent during the Summer, at which point we hope to have greater certainty to offer applicants and developers. In the meantime, officers at Dorset Council are continuing to work proactively to look at finding solutions, including:

Working with Registered Providers to deliver mitigation to existing housing stock to provide additional capacity for affordable housing units;

Engaging with DLUHC to seek additional funding to bring forward mitigation;  
Investigating mitigation options outside of the Poole Harbour catchment, in partnership with neighbouring authorities.

Our website contains information on the latest position on nutrient neutrality and we will continue to provide updates and guidance as the situation evolves.

### **Contacting Us**

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

**Peter Wharf & Laura Beddow, Dorset Councillors for West Purbeck**