



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 28th February 2022** at The Olive Bowl, Brickfields Business Park, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Cllr Paul Harris, QGM, Mayor
Cllr Laura Ashfield
Cllr Barry von Clemens
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Rupert Evill
Cllr Alan Frith
Cllr Mike Gould

Cllr Sharon Cullingford, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Mick Hill
Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Graham Poulter
Cllr Val Potheary
Cllr Mark Walden
Cllr Roger Weeks

In attendance:

Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins
Project Administrator, Serena Burgess
One member of the public

The following joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News

694. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda.

There was no public participation.

695. To receive apologies for absence.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Alison von Clemens and Cllr Keith Wareham who were unable to join the meeting in person due to personal reasons.

696. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests.

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests. However, Cllr Kilcourse declared a personal interest in Agenda item 14.

697. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes.

There were no questions.

698. To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the last meeting of the Full Town Council held on 24th January 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 24th January 2022. The chairman duly signed the minutes.

699. To receive, consider and adopt the following standing committee reports:

a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 7th February 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Purposes meeting held on Monday 7th February 2022 are approved and adopted.

b) Planning Committee Interim meeting held on Monday 24th January 2022 and Monday 14th February 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee Interim meeting held on Monday 24th January 2022 and Monday 14th February 2022 are approved and adopted.

c) HR Committee meeting held on Thursday 17th February 2022 and Monday 21st February 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on Thursday 17th February 2022 and Monday 21st February 2022 are approved and adopted.

d) Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 21st February 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 21st February 2022 are approved and adopted.

700. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.

There were no payments of £10,000 and above.

701. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

702. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Task and Finish Group

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Cllr Barry von Clemens commented that as the printing specification had changed, Financial Regulations require new quotes to be requested.

Cllr Pothecary thanked the group for their work. She stated that the national lighting of beacons will take place at 9.45pm. Cllr Pothecary also suggested that 1950s dress would be appropriate at the Big Lunch.

Cllr Barry von Clemens confirmed that the Big Lunch will have a 1950s theme.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the room hire policy be suspended for the next item.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Town Bridge and Chantry office are made available for organisers of Jubilee events free of charge. Event organisers must still book the rooms in advance with the Town Hall.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the room hire policy be reinstated.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council allow the Carnival Committee to use the photocopier free of charge for the forms for the Spot the Oddity Competition.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council request two free parking days from Dorset Council for Friday 3rd June (Civic Parade) and Sunday 5th June (Big Lunch).

703. To receive and consider written reports from outside bodies, if available, for consideration and approval:

a) Gillingham Town Team

No report was received.

b) The Town Meadow Group

Cllr Cullingford gave a verbal report which confirmed that the electricity boxes had been weatherproofed and a new tap installed. Cllr Cullingford read out a long list of events happening on the Meadow over the Summer and confirmed that the AGM will be held on 27 April at 7.30 pm at the Vicarage School Rooms.

704. To receive an update on the Dorset Council Community Governance Review Consultation.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B](#).

Cllr Harris thanked Cllr Barry von Clemens, Cllr Potheary and the Town Council staff for their input to the consultation. The report was noted.

705. To consider setting up a Sports and Leisure Panel to work with Dorset Council, Developers, organisation and local groups regarding the future sports and leisure provision in Gillingham and to agree membership and terms of reference.

Draft terms of reference were circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to set up a Sports and Leisure Panel.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept and adopt the Terms of Reference as presented.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the following Councillors form the Panel: Cllr Barry von Clemens, Cllr Cullingford, Cllr Frith, Cllr Harris, Cllr Kilcourse, Cllr Poulter and Cllr Weeks.

706. To receive and consider a request from The Gillingham Youth Collective to hold a one-day daytime event for young people in Harding's Park on Saturday 30 July 2022.

Cllr Barry von Clemens commented that a previous similar event had been very popular.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to grant permission for the event.

707. To receive and consider an email from the residents of Tomlins Lane regarding an application to Dorset Council for a road closure on Friday 3rd June (Bank Holiday) for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to support the road closure application.

Cllr Kilcourse abstained from voting due to having declared a personal interest in this item.

708. To receive and consider a report on Christmas opening hours.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council Offices are officially closed from Monday 26th December until Monday 2nd January 2023 inclusive.

709. To receive and consider a draft calendar of meeting for Civic Year 2022/23.

A draft calendar was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the draft calendar of meetings for Civic Year 2022/23, as amended.

710. To consider a change in date for the Annual Town Assembly from Wednesday 20th April 2022 to Wednesday 13th April 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to change the date for the Annual Town Assembly from Wednesday 20th April 2022 to Wednesday 13th April 2022.

711. To receive a development feasibility study for Station Road West. (For information only).

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

712. To receive a report on the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's civic activities.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix F](#). The report was noted.

713. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available.

Dorset Council agenda and minutes are available to view [here](#)

A report from Cllr Belinda Ridout was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix G](#).

Cllr Potheary gave a verbal update on the number of Covid cases in the Dorset Council area. While the number of cases are falling and are below the South West average, they are still above the UK average. There are currently 122 people being treated for Covid in hospital.

Cllr Potheary confirmed that the public consultation on the Community Governance Review is open until 23 May 2022 – this is available online and in hard copy format at libraries. The recommendations will be published in July 2022.

714. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting. Note: Members are advised that inclusion of any item is at the Chairman's discretion and that a Council cannot lawfully decide upon any matter which is not specified in the summons (agenda).

There were no matters pertinent.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

Full Council Meeting – 28 February 2022

Minute no. 702(a)

Gillingham Town Council

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Task and Finish Group

Author: Cllr Donna Toye

Meetings were held on 8th and 22nd February.

Programme of Events – printing costs

Quotes have been requested from 4 suppliers for the printing of a programme:

Supplier A - £1,820

Supplier B – Unable to quote

Supplier C - £945

Supplier D – Unable to quote

The task and finish group have requested some more environmentally friendly quotes to try to minimise footprint, so would like to work with Supplier C but on a revised, more environmentally friendly specification.

Timetable

National

Thursday 2nd June Trooping the colour and lighting of the Beacons

Friday 3rd June National service of thanksgiving

Saturday 4th June Derby @ Epsom and Party at the Palace

Sunday 5th June Big Jubilee Lunch and Jubilee Pageant

Local

Thursday 2nd June 2145 Beacons (TBC)

Friday 3rd June Civic Parade

Saturday 4th June TBC

Sunday 5th June Big Jubilee Lunch

Civic Parade – further information and itinerary:

Civic Service on Friday 3rd June 2022, celebrating The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

10.30am - The Parade will meet at the Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham.

11.00am - The Parade leaves School Road on route to St Mary the Virgin Church along the High St.

11.20am - Church Service

12.00pm - The Parade forms up outside St Mary the Virgin Church and returns to The Town Hall where the event concludes.

Surrounding events (local) – happening throughout

Shop Window Themes Organised by the Chamber of Commerce

Sport competition TBC

Tree planting GTC

Art Display Gillingham School

A Commemorative object for the Town is being researched. Initial investigations lead us to a Stone– 4 possible locations have been identified by the Works Manager. The long flower bed option is currently favoured, but all be investigated. Indicative costs are in the region of £2,000 for a granite stone

Bunting - carnival club have offered to provide and are checking to see who will help them put it up

Shop window spot the oddity - To start Sunday 29th May and finish on Sunday 5th June. Carnival Club organising and providing certificates. They have requested assistance with Prize money and photocopying expenses.

Medals for Children Under investigation by Task and Finish Group

Fancy Dress High Street In progress

Fancy Dress Children’s competition (part of the Big Lunch)

Crown Competition TBC

Museum Display

Library Display

Free parking is requested from Dorset Council for Friday 3rd June (Civic Parade) and Sunday 5th June (Big Lunch)

Recommendations

- **Free Room Hire – That for the Jubilee weekend the Town Bridge and Chantry office are made available for organisers of events, who will need to contact the Town Hall to confirm arrangements.**
- **That Gillingham Town Council allow the Carnival Committee to use the photocopier for the forms for the Spot the Oddity Competition.**
- ~~**That Supplier C is asked to print the souvenir programme on condition that a satisfactory and more minimal spec can be agreed at a cost not to exceed £1,100. This recommendation was withdrawn.**~~
- **That Gillingham Town Council request 2 free parking days from Dorset Council for Friday 3rd June (Civic Parade) and Sunday 5th June (Big Lunch).**

Community Governance Review Consultation update

Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

1. Background

Dorset Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review of parishes in the Dorset Council area during 2021 to 2022.

A Community Governance Review is a legal process whereby Dorset Council will consult with those living in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the parishes identified in the Review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.

The review can consider one or more of the following options:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes and the creation of town councils;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (for instance, the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding);
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes, and
- other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings.

The review cannot:

- change the number of councillors on Dorset Council;
- change Dorset Council ward boundaries, or
- change the amount of money that a parish council raises through your council tax (known as 'precept').

Dorset Council is statutorily responsible for carrying out this Community Governance Review.

The Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published in 2008 recommends that principal councils should undertake a review of its area every 10-15 years. For some areas, a review has not been undertaken for some time and, following the creation of Dorset Council, it is deemed appropriate to undertake a review of all parishes within its area. A Community Governance Review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove any parish boundaries anomalies that may exist.

A Community Governance Review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion, and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Dorset Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will:

- be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- be effective and convenient.

Any other factors, such as council tax precept levels, cannot be considered.

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, Dorset Council must consult local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to Dorset Council to have an interest in the Review.

Gillingham Town Council set up a task and finish group and a report was submitted to Full Council on 26th July 2021. The report is available to view [HERE](#).

On 25th October 2021 the Gillingham Town Council's Community Governance Review Task and Finish Group submitted a further report to Full Council and the following was agreed and resolved:

- that the number of Councillors representing the Gillingham Ham Ward is increased by no. 1 to no. 3 in total;
- that the current Gillingham boundary to the south of the town is extended to Cole Street Lane to enable the new southern extension strategic site to fall within one parish;
- that the online public consultation is completed by the Town Clerk on behalf of Gillingham Town Council and submitted by 28th October 2021, and
- that the Community Governance Review Task and Finish Group should be disbanded with immediate effect.

The report is available to view [HERE](#)

The first period of public consultation, based on the Community Governance Review consultation paper ended on 28 October 2021 and you can view the initial submissions and representations received [HERE](#)

2. Dorset Council's Recommendation for Gillingham

A report of draft recommendations was considered by Dorset Council at its meeting of Full Council on 15 February 2022. The full report is available to view [HERE](#)

The following information and figures are copied from the report:

Based upon the evidence currently available, Dorset Council, on balance, considers that a community governance change would:

- *help to better reflect the local identities and interests of the community, and*
- *help to secure a more effective and convenient governance of the area.*

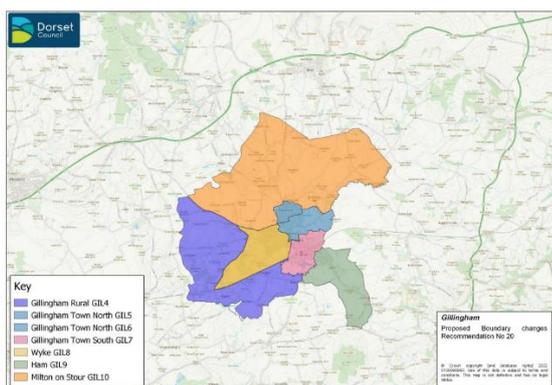
Dorset Council believe that the change to the boundary with East Stour Parish proposed by the Town Council will improve community governance in the area when the proposed development is built. The current governance arrangements for Gillingham are as follows:

Parish Ward	Number of councillors	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2026	Electors per councillor 2026
Ham	2	1212	1870	935
Milton-on-Stour	1	347	358	358
Rural	1	192	198	198
Town	9	4701	5356	595
Wyke	4	2551	2527	632

The current governance arrangements for the Parish Council do not achieve electoral equality, and it is the Government's Guidance that "it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government either for voters or councillors, to have significant difference in levels of representation between different parish wards". Dorset Council therefore recommends a change to councillor numbers and revised warding arrangements as shown in Map Recommendation No.20 as follows:

Parish Ward	Number of councillors	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2026	Electors per councillor 2026
Ham	3	1212	1870	623
Milton-on-Stour	1	347	358	358
Rural	1	192	198	198
Town North	6	4701	3614	602
Town South	3		1733	578
Wyke	4	2551	2536	634

Dorset Council's draft recommendation is to change councillor numbers to achieve electoral equality, and to make changes to the parish boundary and warding arrangements, as identified in Map Recommendation No. 20.



The second period of public consultation will commence on 28 February 2022. Further information will be available [HERE](#)

3. Recommendation:

- That the report is noted.

Sports and Leisure Panel

Terms of Reference

1. All members of the Sports and Leisure Panel must abide by Gillingham Town Council's Code of Conduct.
2. The Sports and Leisure Panel does not have any delegated powers and cannot make decisions on proposed sports and leisure facilities at pre-application stage on behalf of Gillingham Town Council.
3. Members of the Sports and Leisure Panel must make it clear to developers and other parties that any views expressed are personal views and are not the views of the Town Council.
4. Members of the Sports and Leisure Panel should make it clear to developers and other parties that panel members are not professional planning officers and cannot offer professional advice.
5. Membership of the Sports and Leisure Panel will be reviewed at the Annual Town Council meeting in May.
6. Any member of the Town Council, a member of the public or member of staff can be co-opted onto the advisory panel.
7. Members of the panel should elect a lead member.
8. In the first instance, requests to attend a meeting to discuss future sports and leisure proposals should be submitted to the Town Clerk who will advise the lead member accordingly.
9. A Town Council officer must be present at all meetings with developers. Councillors must not meet developers alone.
10. The advisory panel will meet as and when requested, as agreed by the lead member.
11. The lead member of the panel will produce and submit regular written reports to the Planning Committee.
12. The Sports and Leisure Panel will work with the relevant Dorset Council Officers, developers, organisations, local groups and landowners to assess the need for sports and leisure facilities and produce an infrastructure delivery programme in accordance with the Gillingham Southern Extension Master Plan Framework.
13. Adopted by Full Council 28/02/22, minute no. ---

**Gillingham Town Council
Christmas Opening Hours 2022
Author: Office Manager**

1. Introduction – Public Holidays over Christmas

A few staff members have asked for Christmas holiday dates to be agreed at the start of the leave year (April to March), so that they can plan their annual leave.

The dates highlighted are public holidays for 2022/23.

Monday, 26th December

Tuesday, 27th December

Wednesday, 28th December

Thursday, 29th December

Friday, 30th December

Monday, 2nd January 2023

Tuesday, 3rd January 2023 – business as usual

2. Proposal

Proposed Christmas working arrangements for Gillingham Town Council are:

Monday, 26th December – public holiday

Tuesday, 27th December – public holiday

Wednesday, 28th December – statutory leave

Thursday, 29th December – statutory leave

Friday, 30th December – skeleton staff

Monday, 2nd January 2022 – public holiday

Tuesday, 3rd January 2022 – business as usual

All staff will use their two statutory leave days on Wednesday, 28th December and Thursday, 29th December 2022.

There will be skeleton staff on Friday, 30th December 2022. If staff wish to take a day's leave on Friday, it will need to be agreed with their line manager and taken from their annual leave entitlement, as normal.

3. Recommendation

- **That Gillingham Town Council Offices are officially closed from Monday 26th December until Monday 2nd January 2023 inclusive.**

Full Council Meeting – 28 February 2022

Minute no. 709

Gillingham Town Council

Schedule of Meetings – 1st April 2022 – 31st May 2023

Key: ATA = Annual Town Assembly AC = Annual Council BM = Budget Meeting
MM = Mayor Making Ceremony NM = No Meeting * Meeting on a Tuesday after Bank Holiday

Meeting	April 22	May 22	June 22	July 22	Aug 22	Sept 22	Oct 22
General Purposes	4	3*	6	4	1	5	3
Planning	11	9	13	11	8	12	10
HR	19*	16	20	18	15	19	17
Finance	19*	16	20	18	15	19	17
Planning	25	16	27	25	22	26	24
Full Council	25 13 ATA	23 AC 25 MM	27	25	22	26	24

Meeting	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	April 23	May 23
General Purposes	7	5	9	6	6	3	2*
Planning	14	5	9	13	13	11*	8
HR	21	NM	16	20	20	17	15
Finance	21	NM	16	20	20	17	15
Planning	28	NM	23	27	27	24	22
Full Council	28 30 BM	12	23	27	27	24 19 ATA	22 AC 24 MM

Full Council Minutes 28/02/2022 Signed 28/03/22

Full Council Meeting – 28 February 2022

Minute no. 712

Gillingham Town Council

Mayor's Report - February 2022

It has been a quiet month.

12th February 2022 – High Sheriffs Reception, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester

Our county High Sheriff held a reception at the refurbished Dorset County Museum, Dorchester on Saturday 12 February. Guests included the county Lord Lieutenant, the incoming High Sheriff, County Council representatives, Mayors and Mayoresses or Consorts from across the County, the Museum refurbishment development team and funding patrons plus private guests of the High Sheriff.

The High Sheriff thanked all those present for their support during his year in office, which comes to an end in April. I and your Mayoress took the opportunity to talk with the High Sheriff about his upcoming visit to Gillingham on 5th March and to meet with the incoming High Sheriff. The Town looks forward to inviting her to visit during her term of office.

Attendees were invited to tour the refurbished museum at the conclusion of the reception.

Full Council Meeting – 28 February 2022

Minute no. 713

Dorset Council Gillingham Ward Monthly Report

Cllr Belinda Ridout – February 2022

Face-to-face Meetings - Cabinet, Full Council and Committee meetings resumed in-person from Tuesday, 15th February, the first one being Full Council Budget Meeting at County Hall. One of the positive things Covid has taught us is that communication is everything and enabling residents to be able to watch live or recorded meetings has been very successful, which is great. It is important that this continues and changes have been made to modernise and make council meetings more accessible. Members of the public and reporters will still be able to attend in person, but are asked to wear a face covering and carry out a lateral flow test before they attend. Meetings will continue be streamed using newly installed equipment and will be available for people to watch online, either live or recorded.

Adult social Care Recruitment – with huge demand for services within Adult Social Care there is currently a recruitment drive to help boost staff numbers. Particularly for Social Workers and Occupational therapists, but there are also other roles within the service which can be applied for. Anyone interested, please go to: jobs.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk to see what is available.

Transforming Customer Services online – Dorset Council has started to implement a new customer platform which will join up customer information and provide people with an account to access services. Services on the platform will be automated as much as possible and designed around customers' needs. It will allow customers to access DC services more conveniently and change their details more easily. It will free up vital resource to help and support more vulnerable residents and those who are not able to use online. It will also enable services to be more efficient and faster over time and give added flexibility to adapt quickly to ever-changing demand. So far, the Dorset Council website and Public Health Dorset website have been added onto the platform. Members of the public have been helping to test the new sites to see how easy and quick they are to navigate and will continue to make improvements. Dorset is one of the first councils to publish the councillor register of interest details onto the website. Previously a manual process, this process is now more efficient, open and accessible to residents and easy to update.

Tour of Britain Cycle Race is coming to Dorset later this year for the first time. Dorset will host the penultimate stage of this prestigious cycle race on Saturday, 10th September, as the eight stage event works its way down from Aberdeenshire to the Isle of Wight.

Planning Convergence – I reported previously on the Planning Convergence and transformation project, streaming the six pre-unitary district and borough planning systems into one and transforming processes to achieve efficiency and reduce costs. Each area had

47 years' worth of information including planning applications, building control applications, land charge applications and tree preservation orders. In one year the project has transferred over 4 million documents! The final convergence phase will be completed by March and the council will turn to transformation, to develop a modern planning system, streamlining processes and making it easier for customers to use.

Land Charges/Searches – due to a big surge in house sales and insufficient staff, Dorset Council was very behind in search times. Last October this was taking 62 working days but with new trained staff the January figure was 37 days, despite continuing high numbers of requests for searches: 763 requests against a norm of 500 or so.

Queen's Platinum Celebrations – anyone needing to know how to apply for a street party to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, the link to the Dorset Council street party applications and related guidance for event organisers to consider is as follows: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/street-party-on-the-highway>. You may also find useful information at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party>.

Help Dorset's Children get ready to thrive – Families, carers, education settings and communities are being asked for their thoughts on laying the right foundations so Dorset's children have the best opportunities to thrive. Through an online survey, Dorset Council wants people to think about the skills pre-school age children need to learn so they are ready socially, physically and intellectually to start school. Survey deadline is 31st March (approx. 15 minutes).

Mobile rollout – Dorset Council has been awarded £500,000 from the government to lead a project looking at ways to improve the rollout of mobile connectivity. Joining forces with Bournemouth, Christchurch & Pool and Hampshire County Councils, the new 'Wessex Digital Infrastructure Accelerator' scheme will examine how online mapping technology can help speed up the rollout of connectivity. It will build on the asset mapping work done as part of the award-winning 5G Rural Dorset project, which looked at how publicly owned buildings and equipment can be used to encourage mobile operators to speed up coverage and reduce costs. The aim is to enable quicker and cheaper roll-outs of broadband and wireless networks. The project will identify how street furniture, such as CCTV poles and road signs can be used to improve 4G and 5G coverage to meet surging demand for connectivity. In time it could mean faster rollout of connectivity and coverage and make rural areas much more attractive to mobile operators.

Struggling to keep warm this winter? – If you know someone who needs help to keep their home warm and reduce their energy bills, Dorset's Local Energy Advice Partnership could help. Eligible residents will be supported with free energy advice, energy saving devices and access to other improvements like heating upgrades and insulation. The funding is due to end soon. Contact Ridgewater Energy at info@ridgewaterenergy.co.uk or call 01202 612726

Voluntary & Community Support – DC has awarded two 18 month contracts for voluntary and community organisations. Community Action Network and Alacrify Foundation CIC, (otherwise known as #HelpAndKindness, which played a vital part in supporting Dorset residents through the Covid-19 pandemic), have been awarded contracts to provide Infrastructure Support across the council area for the voluntary and community sector.

Starting February 1st, they will provide training, support and development support for voluntary and community groups, along with communication, networking and representation of and for the sector.

Strategic Planning Committee – Application P/FUL/2021/02046 for a 30MW Solar Farm at Park Farm, Gillingham was refused on Monday, 24th January, 2022 as per the Case Officer’s recommendation. There were good grounds for refusal that would stand up at appeal.

Northern Area Planning Committee – Application P/OUT/2021/04019 – outline permission for up to 80 dwellings at Common Mead Lane (near the Mellows nursing home) was approved. The amended version included significant community benefit in the form of Section 106 Heads of Terms, bio-diversity gain and the transfer of ‘one oak’ field to Gillingham Town Council, which could not be ignored. Also, which could not be ignored, the previously refused outline application, currently at appeal, which did not include the significant community benefit and which is strongly predicted to be upheld. The voting was very tight. The chairman had the casting vote to approve.

Voluntary and Community Grants -Dorset Council has launched a new round of grants to support social, voluntary and community sector organisations. The Organisational Support Revenue Fund will provide core revenue support to local community organisations that address the needs of disadvantaged, under served and marginalized communities in Dorset. Grants between £5,000 - £10,000 per annum for up to 2 years to help with running costs. Applications must be submitted on the council’s online application form. Further details can be found on the council’s website or by emailing: communities@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Applications to be received by Friday, 1st April. Awards will be made on 20th April.

Council Budget – The council’s budget for next financial year (2022-23) was approved at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday, 15th February. The budget includes:

- A 10% increase for adult social care – to fund the rising need for social care in the local population and the rising costs of providing this care.
- A 4% increase for children’s services – to fund improvements to support children in care and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- £10m capital investment over the next 5 years to help fund the delivery of the council’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.
- An extra £0.75m for housing to support the development of more new homes with Registered Providers and the supply of better value temporary accommodation from the private rented sector.

Council tax will increase by just under 3%, of which 1% is the adult social care precept. This is equivalent to £1.02 extra per week for a Band D property.

Local Heritage Lists – local communities can now nominate locally important buildings, structures, designed landscapes, sites and places to be considered on a new Local Heritage Lists. The idea is to make it easy for everyone to nominate and celebrate the heritage that is important to their local area. A joint project between Dorset Council and BCP Council using a grant of £70,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Local Heritage Lists will provide a free publicly accessible record of non-designated

heritage assets, whose conservation will then be a material consideration in planning decisions. More information on the Dorset and BCP Council websites. Nominations are open for 8 weeks.

Libraries Consultation update – the first phase of the ‘Let’s Talk Libraries’ Consultation ended in January with over 7000 responses. The eleven week consultation asked for views from people of all ages who use Dorset Council owned libraries and those who don’t, to find out what they like, what they don’t like and what would encourage them to use the library service in the future. Responses are now being reviewed and will inform a draft library strategy, which will undergo a second public consultation in the summer, aiming for implementation April 2023.

Climate and Ecological Strategy – The results of a survey published recently by Climate Emergency UK, showed that of 409 local authorities across the UK, 84 still did not have climate action plans, while 139 had not committed to reach net zero emissions by a specific date. Dorset is rated 40th in the whole of England, out of a total of 376 authorities – almost in the top 10% in the UK. The recently approved budget invests revenue and capital into reaching Dorset’s target to be carbon neutral by 2040 or earlier. A new Corporate Director for Climate and Ecological Sustainability has just been appointed by Dorset Council. Steven Ford has over 18 years’ experience of working in public policy related fields and his primary objectives will be the successful delivery of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, working closely with councillors, senior officers and services across the entire organisation.

On-street parking charge increase – From Friday, 25th February, on-street parking charges will increase as part of Dorset Council’s parking transformation project. The changes will see a more consistent approach to on-street charging, following the same tiered approach for the recent Dorset Council car park price changes. On-street parking will be charged at a higher price than car park prices at the same location. This is to generate a higher turnover of cars, helping to keep on-street spaces for Blue Badge Holders and giving all residents better access to local businesses when popping into town for a quick visit. Waivers can still be purchased for tradespeople who need to park for work.

Dorset Prepared Community Resilience Workshops – this will benefit all existing voluntary organisations and community emergency volunteers. The Dorset Local Resilience Forum will be hosting several community resilience awareness raising sessions, running between 7th and 11th March, 2022, a week-long series of online events and awareness raising with partner organisations. Subjects will include: Flooding and the Flood Warden scheme in Dorset; Climate Change; Avoiding Scams; Cyber Security; Volunteering in the Community; Counter Terrorism; Community Resilience and Emergency Planning; Fire Safety and Safe and Well Advice and Utility companies and how they plan for incidents. The events will be a range of live and pre-recorded presentations with Q&A sessions between Monday and Friday, starting 9.30am each day. To find out more and register your interest, go to dorsetprepared.org.uk/community-resilience-week-march-2022/ and follow the link to Eventbrite. Tickets are free.

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