



## **David Crowhurst Reports to Parish Councils**

The following report gives a snapshot over main heads of activity within the County and the area that I cover.

The report has been circulated to each Parish Council Clerk for the information of members. It should help to limit the time taken to report at the meeting, but with the opportunity for members of the Parish Council to ask questions.

### **Local Government – Local and National**

With the County Council setting an increase well below 5% there was no threat of action for capping of Council Tax. A recent national report states that Portsmouth City Council and seven Police Authorities will be capped. This will incur cost for the various authorities in recalculating and resubmitting Council Tax Bills. In allocating the total from the Area Based Grant for Dorset, part of the Government support, it has been decided to increase the allocation for road safety and adult social care. At the meeting of the Council on 24<sup>th</sup> April it was agreed that an additional member should be added to the Cabinet, making seven in all, in order to increase the time available for the area of Adult Social Care and the Ageing population in the County. The Fit for Future Programme is now well advanced with work going on to identify the system of IT that will cover all needs and deal with some complex areas. The Call Centre has dealt with over 50,000 calls since opening in February of this year. It is proving to be an effective and economic way of dealing with enquiries.

### **Libraries**

The work on training volunteers for work in the various libraries will commence soon. They will commence duties in September with the self service system in operation. There is still time for volunteers to come forward, either through Parish Councils or Friends Groups. The charges for IT will commence in mid May.

### **Trading Standards and Registration**

A range of charges and fees has been agreed for the year 2008/9 covering the regulatory services provided. The Service locally has recently been involved in an investment scam where an elderly man was encouraged to invest £230,000 in a worthless enterprise. The Public are encouraged to report to Trading Standards unwelcome approaches for the investment of money. Following action taken last year at the Dorset Steam Fair convictions for counterfeiting, covering clothing and other goods, were secured through the Courts.

### **Dorchester Pedestrian and Traffic Management**

Whilst the provision of capital money for the scheme has failed to achieve a high enough level of priority there are some parts of the Scheme that will go forward. A scheme for the pedestrianisation of the whole of South Street and New Street has been publicly advertised. It will involve the relocation of parking places for Blue Badge users.

### **Post Offices**

The full extent of proposed closures of Post Offices in Dorset will not be known until later in the year. In the meantime the County Council, in consultation with other Counties, has set up an officer working group to prepare an action plan. Broadmayne Village has a group in being that was formed at the Annual Parish Meeting. Moves to retain Post Offices will receive my full support.

## **Highways**

There are some positive outcomes for highway safety in the Division. A plan has been prepared by Officers to address the various problems on the B3390. Whilst there is still concern being expressed nevertheless it is a positive development. Monitoring of traffic on the A352 is being carried out prior to the introduction of the traffic measures in the area bounded by the A35 the A352 and the B3390. This will be helpful also in addressing the increased traffic that will arise from the changed pattern of waste transport. The design and location for a pedestrian island on the A352 at Owermoigne has been approved and will be provided in 2009/10 or earlier if funds become available. Following a recent meeting at Dewlish an improvement for traffic management at the crossroads was agreed and work on identifying passing places on the road through to Puddletown will hopefully be fruitful. A recent report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee commented on the way that requests for minor highway and transport work is handled. The Parish Maintenance Units continue to be an effective means of dealing with minor issues. Information from Parish Councils and local members is an important part of the follow up process.

## **Waste Disposal, Recycling and Mineral Extraction**

A strategy to identify sites for mineral extraction within the County is progressing. The cost to the County for arranging the dumping of waste in landfill will rise from £24 to £32 per tonne and is set to rise to £50 over the next three years. The Government has undertaken to refund the charges above a certain level, money that could be used for recycling and refuse facilities. The accumulated refunds to date are estimated at £1.5billion nationally.

## **Dorchester Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre**

The provision of the new Centre is moving forward with the recent formation of a Partnership Project Board, to oversee the building and future operation of the Centre. The draft terms of use provide for a significant time allocation for use by the Public. This should be well received and will hopefully encourage more people to use the facility.

## **Byways Open to All Traffic**

With cases in the County still outstanding from those submitted by FODROW and others a recent case heard at the Court of Appeal in London gives hope. In a case involving Winchester College the Court decided that the submission for upgrade to a BOAT was not acceptable. For those Parish Councils where cases are still outstanding the outcome of the case brings hope. I have asked lawyers at County Hall to give me an update in reference to the decision.

David Crowhurst  
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