

DAPTC Larger Parish and Town Councils Committee meeting in Lyme Regis Friday
31st August 2018

Concern was expressed at the beginning of the meeting about the non-attendance of the Chief Executive at this meeting and area meetings. It was felt that her attendance would be beneficial as she would be able to update member Councils on progress with Local Government Re-organisation. In the ensuing discussion, it was stated that Councillors at all levels feel uninformed as little information seems to be emanating from the Shadow Dorset Council. It was also thought that some task and finish groups' work was suspended temporarily. The discussion continued with concern about who will provide services, elections and grants to organisations such as Citizens Advice. Mr Stephen Hill from the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland and North Dorset partnership explained that grants and services would continue as at present "for the time being". A working group will recommend a budget concerning grants and similar. Great concern was expressed that such information as is being received is coming from the partnership previously mentioned and that no information was coming from the eastern side of the County despite the fact that 2/3 of the County's population lives in the eastern side of the County.

Concerns were also expressed about finances -would Town and Parish Councils receive their precepts on time? When would policies concerning such issues as single occupancy and empty properties be determined/harmonised? There was also concern about the disaggregation of services currently run in partnership for Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council. The issue of the review of Local Plans was also raised as District/Borough Councils are at different phases of review and there are concerns about the 5year land supply.

Mr Hill stated that the new Chief Executive of Dorset Council would be appointed on 27th September and would produce a paper about the 2nd tier structure soon after appointment. Town and Parish Councils are concerned about setting their budgets before the 2nd tier appointments are made, which is likely to be late in the year. Concern was also expressed about the lower level of business rates in rural Dorset as it is rate support grant is being phased out completely and the grant to Dorset has already been drastically reduced. There was some discussion about Planning and the likely structure and possible delegations in this function.. It was stated that the Shadow Authority has agreed principles governing the transfer of assets to Town and Parish Councils. Concern was expressed about the future of some assets such as the Barrington in Ferndown. It was stated that it might be offered for sale on the open market after transfer to Dorset Council. Some assets in North Dorset are being sold prior to the new Council being formed and it was questioned where the proceeds from such sales will go.

There is a Shadow Authority website which will have information as it is available. Newsletters will be sent to all Town and Parish Clerks for cascading to all Councillors.

The Chief Executive submitted a written report which covered some of the issues raised as above and in addition arrangements for the AGM which will be held on Saturday 10th November, the annual conference to be held on 26th March 2019 at Kingston Maurward and training events planned. In response to a question it was

stated that it is not possible to provide training about the new Dorset Council at present and that it is hoped to provide training on the new National Planning Policy Framework in the autumn. More training courses are requested to be held in the East at venues convenient to the larger Councils. Fears were expressed that at least one Council might leave the association if this does not happen. It was also stated that an EDDC Officer has offered to provide free training on the NPPF but no response has been received to this offer from the Association.

The Chairman reported on motions submitted for consideration at the AGM. These motions would be discussed at the next Executive committee meeting prior to inclusion on the AGM agenda. The topics include subsidised transport to education for post 16 year olds, subsidies for local bus services. The Chairman reported that a volunteer-run service from Beaminster to Bridport has been set up. It has taken 9 months to establish and it is hoped it will break even. This has been established because local bus services have been discontinued following removal of subsidies by the County Council.

The NALC report included savings NALC has achieved for Town and Parish Councils for example by the removal of the need to appoint Data Protection Officers (arrangements for the AGM and Conference, NALC's financial position, changes in the Ministerial team which affect the sector, a review of NALC's strategic plan, two presentations on local and Principle Councils working together (one of which was given by the Dorset rep) and changes to the appointment of the President and Vice Presidents.

Member Councils reported on items as follows:-

Dorchester: Following consultations, no development is proposed for the market site but it has been proposed to move it to create a new covered market on the Charles Street site. The Council is considering its response to the proposal for a large number of new homes to the north of the town as part of the current plan review

Wareham: proceeding with the Neighbourhood Plan at a good pace.

Colehill: experiencing heavy traffic through Colehill due to the development on the Cranborne Road (site used to be in Colehill) but no action is possible to alleviate the problem. Allenvie Road is closed for a long period which is adding to the traffic problems in Colehill, Furzehill wished to become a separate parish but EDDC has refused this request. Furzehill then requested to become part of Holt parish and this has also been refused.

Blandford Forum: "Norden" the offices of the District Council is being sold for housing and there was no consultation about the future use of the site. The Town Council believes that some form of meeting place should be retained on this site.

Beaminster: The Town Council with Bridport Town Council, has established a bus service to replace one lost due to withdrawal of subsidy by Dorset County Council. The Council feels strongly that it should not be necessary for this action but faced with stranded residents who are unable to drive, it felt there was no alternative. It has taken 9 months to set up and been fraught with difficulties. The new play area which has been part funded by LEADER money but requiring a loan to bridge the gap before the money is received, is nearing completion. A picnic table presented by the Youth Club was destroyed by fire resulting from use of a portable barbecue. There was an attempt to remove the cash machine in the town which was unsuccessful but the resulting damage to the listed building in which it is situated is considerable and

life in the town has been considerably disrupted as a result and is expected to last for 6 months.

West Moors: A second multi activity day was held in July which was well attended and raised funds for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. The parish council has requested the transfer of a car park and toilets from EDDC. Lottery funding has been awarded for public engagement activity. Tendering is taking place for renewal of the skate park.

Swanage: The Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust is running the youth and community centre which is occupied approx. 18 hours per day and has a waiting list of potential users. It has taken over another smaller hall which will be refurbished. The Heritage Centre and toilets will be transferred to the Town Council from Purbeck District Council, Town Council having been maintaining them. The Council will join a "coastal councils" group with Weymouth, Sidmouth, Seaton and Lyme Regis. The Dorset and East Devon FLAG has agreed to contribute 75% towards the cost of refurbishing of fishing huts and a slipway.

Ferndown: The Mayor, Cllr Steven Lugg, died and his funeral took place on 23rd August. The Council has received £100K from the Heathland mitigation fund for the wheelpark. The Council will not be taking on any assets from EDDC as it would involve extra expenditure and no funds will be transferred. Work on the King George V pavilion is behind schedule due to a problem with the car park. The Youth club is doing well and expanding. There are major traffic problems at Longham and LEP money will be sought for improvements, there being no money available from DCC Highways. The Post Office is moving and no consultation has been carried out. The new location is further from the Town centre and smaller which will cause problems as the existing Post Office often has long queues. The Town Council will make representations to the Post Office about this. The Town Council is considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan but is concerned about the costs.

Lyme Regis: The Regatta, Lifeboat Day and Jazz Festival have all taken place and were very successful. The Town Council is talking to West Dorset District Council about the transfer of assets. A new film about Mary Anning has been made and will be released next year. The problems relating to a pedlar selling ice cream are on going. Only the Police can take action and it was stated that there are no Police in Lyme Regis. There is a proposal to convert the Dorset AONB with some additional areas into a National Park. A desktop exercise is being carried out nationally to consider several proposals for new National Parks. It is proposed to include a large section of the coast in any new Park in Dorset.

Lytchet Minster and Upton: The Town Council has requested the transfer of the Library and Youth Hut. The carnival has been held in Upton. Travellers camped on the Recreation Ground. They were evicted quickly but left waste including human excrement behind.

Corfe Mullen: The Council has objected to all of the Local Plan updates in Corfe Mullen. The Council has made a formal complaint about the standard of weed spraying carried out. The method used has changed and it has not been carried out properly. The wheelpark funded by the Heathland Mitigation fund opened that afternoon. It has been built before adjacent land is developed for housing so that residents have no grounds for complaint.

Verwood: The death of District and former Town Councillor Boyd Mortimer was reported. A by election was held for the District Council seat and an uncontested by election was held for a Town Council seat vacated due to resignation. The Town Council will take over the toilets, play areas and Scout and Guide Huts from EDDC.

Armed Forces day had been marked by a brief ceremony on Ferret Green at which two special commemorative seats were dedicated and the Green had been decorated with poppies made by the Clerk and her husband.

It was requested that the timing of committee meetings be discussed at the next meeting. One Council wishes the committee to meet in the evening so that Councillors who work during the day are able to be representatives. It was agreed that Weymouth Town Council if formed be invited to send representatives to future meetings.

The next meeting will be held on 16th November in the Council Chamber at Blandford Town Council.