

Small Domestic Sewage Discharges—a requirement to register

The requirement to register small domestic sewage discharges from septic tanks and small sewage treatment plants has changed in England. The obligation was a result of regulations made in 2010 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Welsh Government, as part of the implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive. Registration was considered to provide the 'lightest touch' approach to meet legal obligations. However, DEFRA are now undertaking a joint review with Government on the requirement to register small domestic sewage discharges in England, details of which will be announced in the next few weeks. Defra will be announcing a consultation on the options and while the review is underway they will *not* require the registration of small domestic sewage discharges including septic tanks.



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Fast broadband provision in Dorset

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is part of the Government's Department of Culture Media and Sports. It was set up to distribute money left over from the digital TV changeover budget and it decided to fund the gaps in broadband coverage that have developed in rural communities. It also decided to distribute such funding via county councils.

BDUK defined their target as ensuring that 90% of premises receive 'superfast broadband' (20+ Mbps) with the remainder getting 'at least 2 Mbps'.

Dorset County Council (DCC) submitted a broadband plan to BDUK but it was rejected in June this year. BDUK have now asked DCC to resubmit their plan focused this time specifically on rural broadband and to back it by equal matching funding,

The fund available to DCC is £9.4m and DCC has committed itself to finding the same amount, since better broadband service is now viewed as one of the top priorities for the county.

However, DCC has recently begun seeking funding contributions from organisations and councils (parish and district) across the county and it is hoped that it will soon become clearer where the required funding is expected to come from.

County officials will resubmit their application, this time emphasising community involvement. BDUK has started a procurement process that should allow DCC to start issuing draw-down contracts from around mid-2012. The idea is that the BDUK+DCC grant funding will be offered to competing suppliers as a subsidy for them to provide the better broadband service required.

The latest news is that DCC's cabinet has met and agreed:

- ◇ to fund £6.5m of the BDUK required 'matching funds' from their budget, the remainder to come from contributions from the district councils (meetings are to be held by them soon);
- ◇ to commit to fund the necessary staff resources to manage the project;
- ◇ to re-submit the funding bid to BDUK in January.

So what can Char Chat readers do?

If you think broadband should be better and faster and we should get what we pay for then let a councillor or your Char Chat editors know.

Report from PCSO Luke White

Lyme Regis Safer Neighbourhood Team has been responsible for the Char Valley area for about six months now, and we have enjoyed being out and about meeting people and getting to know the community.

Since June this year there have been 8 reported crimes in the Char Valley area. Two of these were thefts from cars at beauty spots. Please do not leave anything on show when leaving your car; even a rucksack left on a seat can make your car an inviting target. Three crimes were thefts of machinery and metal, which I will mention later. Of the other three crimes, two were domestic related and one was a dog bite.

The majority of the crimes which affect our rural community in the Bridport area involve thefts of items from sheds and gardens. Things such as tools, garden machinery and scrap metal make up the bulk of the crimes which are reported to us. With the high price of scrap metal it is important that we all take precautions to protect our belongings. Do not leave tools and machinery such as lawn mowers or chainsaws on display in gardens. Consider marking your property to make it identifiable, either with products such as SelectaDNA or simply by painting them a bright colour.

If you do happen to have any scrap metal lying around then take it along to a scrap dealer so that you benefit from its monetary value rather than someone else! As the evenings draw in, security lighting can help to alert you to uninvited visitors.

If you would like some more crime prevention advice, then we would be more than happy to come and offer you some tips on how you could better protect yourself and your property from crime.

Dorset Police's non-emergency phone number has recently changed. You can now simply call 101, which replaces the 01305 222222 number. Lyme Regis Safer Neighbourhood team can also be contacted on our mobile 07500816312.



Affordable Housing in Whitchurch Canonorum

An update

Proposals to develop Affordable Housing to meet the needs of local people date back to the Parish Plan which was completed in 2003. In the Plan housing was identified as the most important issue and that the provision of social housing was essential to the future of the village.

In 2004, with the assistance of the Dorset Community Action Trust, a survey of the Parish was carried out which identified 16 households in need of housing. 75% of the respondents to the survey supported the development of affordable housing. Following the completion of the survey a request was sent out in Char Chat in December 2004 asking landowners to come forward with potential sites for consideration. A Steering Group was formed consisting members of the Parish Council and local residents.

Several sites were suggested in Whitchurch village and Morcombelake. Hastoe Housing Association were invited to inspect the sites with the Steering Group.

In March 2006 a consultation day was held to discuss the potential sites and there was overwhelming support for the project.

A potential site was identified in the village but efforts to develop it did not progress. Two alternative sites were subsequently offered for the project in Higher Street and Bluntshay Lane.

Hastoe prepared some draft proposals for a housing scheme on the sites and these were displayed at a public consultation in the village hall in March 2010. Fifteen comments were received and the vast majority were in favour of the development.

A planning application was submitted in July 2011 but this was subsequently withdrawn to consider comments that were submitted by the public. The plans have been amended to reflect some of these comments and the revised plans were on display in Whitchurch village hall on the 11th October from 6:30pm - 8pm.

Rob Aspray, WDDC Rural Housing Enabling Officer



War of the Weeds

Coming to a field near you



They are: (above) **Giant Hogweed** and **Himalayan Balsam** and (below) **Japanese Knotweed** and **Ragwort**. The first three were introduced into the UK many years ago as ornamental garden plants. They don't look especially scary, do they? But they are on the Environment Agency's hit list and you should not let their beauty deceive you. Like Houdini, resisting all efforts to contain them, they have escaped from the garden and are now making themselves at home in the country side ... with disastrous effects. They are muscling out our native wild flowers. The balsam's colonisation of river banks renders them vulnerable to erosion over winter when the plant dies back. The hogweed is armed and dangerous, its sap causing severe blistering to the skin, and it can grow to a height of five meters. As for knotweed ... well ... it's big, beefy and virtually indestructible.

You get the picture? But like all bullies, they have their weaknesses and a variety of controls are available to help eradicate them and the Environment Agency offers detailed information about identification, control and disposal, as dealing with these plants at the right time in their growing cycle and removal of the arisings as directed is crucial.

Ragwort falls into a rather different category. It is a very common wild flower but highly poisonous to cattle, horses, pigs and chickens; even dead or dying plants are attractive to livestock. If silaged, it will contaminate the whole clamp. Older sheep and goats allowed to grazed infected grassland over winter and early spring are helpful in its control and if you should wish to deal with it manually, pulling not cutting is advised.

If you should spot any of these plants on verges or in public places you can contact the Council or the Environment Agency. If sighted on private land you can alert the landowner. Other organisations such as The National Trust and local wildlife trusts also organize working parties to clear infested areas. If you know of an area near you that is especially badly affected, perhaps you might consider organizing one yourself?

But before going into battle it is very important to understand that if you do the wrong thing you might make the situation worse or even face prosecution. **So follow the experts' advice.** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that it is an offence to "plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild" any plant listed in Schedule nine, Part II of the Act. This lists over 30 plants including Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed. It's down to landowners to control these plants, but they don't have to remove them. However, causing the plants to spread by removing or disposing of them incorrectly would be illegal and the police are responsible for investigating any offences.

For more information, contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 or Dorset District Council on 01305 221 000 or log on to either Dorset for You or the Agency's website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk and search for invasive weeds and knotweed or hogweed.



Be afraid!

Be very afraid!



Village Hall Updates

James Hargreaves Community Hall

- We took part in the BRIDPORT CHARTER FAYRE on July 2nd (picture bottom right) raising £387 for hall funds
- Our **STRAWBERRY TEA** held on the 31st July was a most enjoyable event. The weather remained fine if a bit cloudy and we raised £267
- **Morcombelake Art Group** held its annual exhibition in the hall from August 27th to 29th.
- We ran a bric-a-brac stall, beat-the-buzzer game, and a plate-smashing stall at the Whitchurch, Morcombelake & Ryall Flower Show (picture bottom left) and made £206.30
- **Bridge Lessons** for improvers have started again in the hall on Wednesdays from 2 until 4pm.
- There will be a **Table Top Sale** for Crafts, Christmas and Collectables on Sunday 23rd October from 1 until 4 pm
- We will be running a stall at Bridport Late Night Shopping on December 7th



Whitchurch Village Hall

- The painting of the hall's interior walls is now complete and we thank the Probation Service for providing the young people who have done a good job.
- The big issue that the committee is addressing is the refurbishment of the "back entrance" and the "old kitchen". The final decision will be made following the **AGM** which will be at the hall on **Thursday 10th November at 7.30pm**. The cost of the project is likely to be about £25,000. We welcome your views - a plan will be available.
- Our next social events include:
 - ◇ 29th October - a film night of old Dorset - no Melvyn Bragg but you may spot your grandparents. There will be a ploughmans meal
 - ◇ 29th January - the famous Farmhouse Breakfast

Wootton Village Hall

- The harvest supper, held on Saturday, 1 October was very well supported. Elizabeth and Tom Fortescue who have recently moved from the village to Bridport attended, and Elizabeth was given 4 olive trees, presented to her by Lord Bradbury as a token of esteem from the village for her contribution to village life during her residence here.
- We have the popular yearly visit from Screenbites on Thursday, 13 October. The film shown was "Loose Cannons" and delicious samples of local food were to be tasted. There are also 2 Artsreach productions lined up: the Churchfitters are coming on Friday, 11 November and Bojangles on Friday, 9 December. There will be a bar at both events, and 20% of door sales, bar and raffle profit will be donated to the hall.
- At the last committee meeting held on 27 September, we were informed that the exterior wall at the rear of the hall has now been repainted, and the hall is generally up to date with repairs. Notices regarding dog fouling, recently put up in the area around the hall, have so far solved this problem.

