

COUNCIL'S GO GREEN

Dorset County Council is to borrow up to £1.5 million to finance the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on suitable County Council owned buildings. The income from selling surplus electricity to the national grid over 25 years will pay back the loan and earn a net income of around £1.5 million as well as reducing energy costs reports County Councillor David Budd.

Purbeck District Council is investing £240,000 from its capital reserve to install solar panels at Westport House, Wareham and the Purbeck Business Centre, Swanage. The investment which will reduce electricity cost could be repaid in under 10 years or alternatively the income from selling surplus electricity could be used to help pay the day to day costs of running Council services during these difficult financial times says Cllr Eric Osmond.

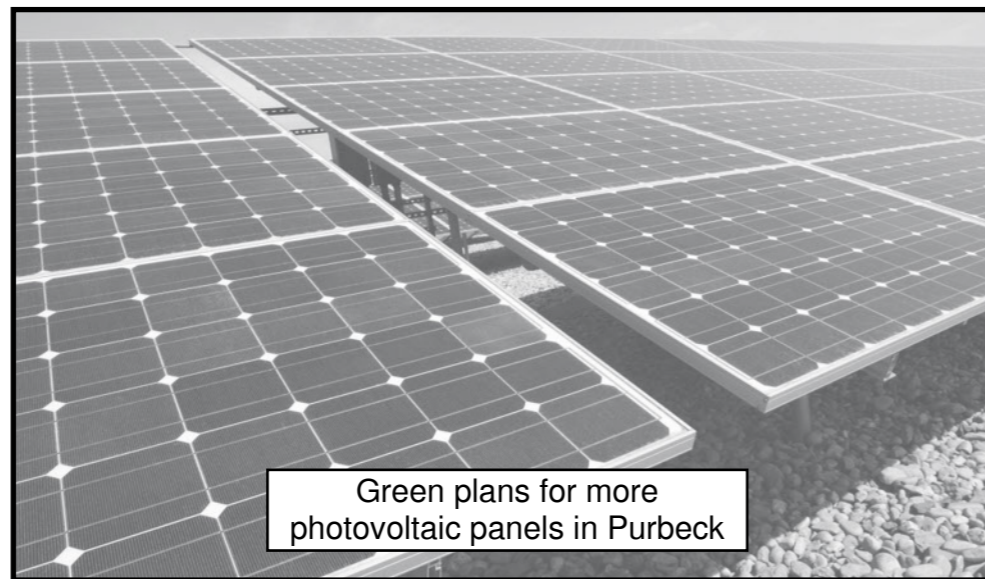
Following a proposal by the Liberal Democrats the Council is investigating replacing the worn out 30 year old gas heating

boilers at Westport House with a biomass boiler, fuelled by wood pellets which is a sustainable fuel, supplemented by a gas condensing boiler for peak winter demand. This system will be cheaper to run than the existing.

Purbeck Planners have also gone green. Following the rejection of the wind farm near East Stoke in the morning of the March Planning Board meeting, in the afternoon Councillors approved a development of 1,100 solar photovoltaic panels at Sleppe Farm near Lytchett

Minster. The July meeting approved a further 700 solar panels at the farm, the 1,800 panels located on metal frames in a field will generate enough electricity to power 640 average sized homes.

An appeal to the Planning Inspectorate by the wind farm company against the democratic decision to refuse planning permission could still be made up until the end of September says Planning Board member Cllr Keith Critchley.



Green plans for more photovoltaic panels in Purbeck

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Let us know ...

Please use the space below to let us know of any concerns or issues that you have

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Printed by York Road Print, 14 York Road, Broadstone, BH18 8ET
Published & Promoted by MDNP Liberal Democrats, 14 York Road, Broadstone, BH18 8ET

From Councillors Eric Osmond, Keith Critchley and David Budd

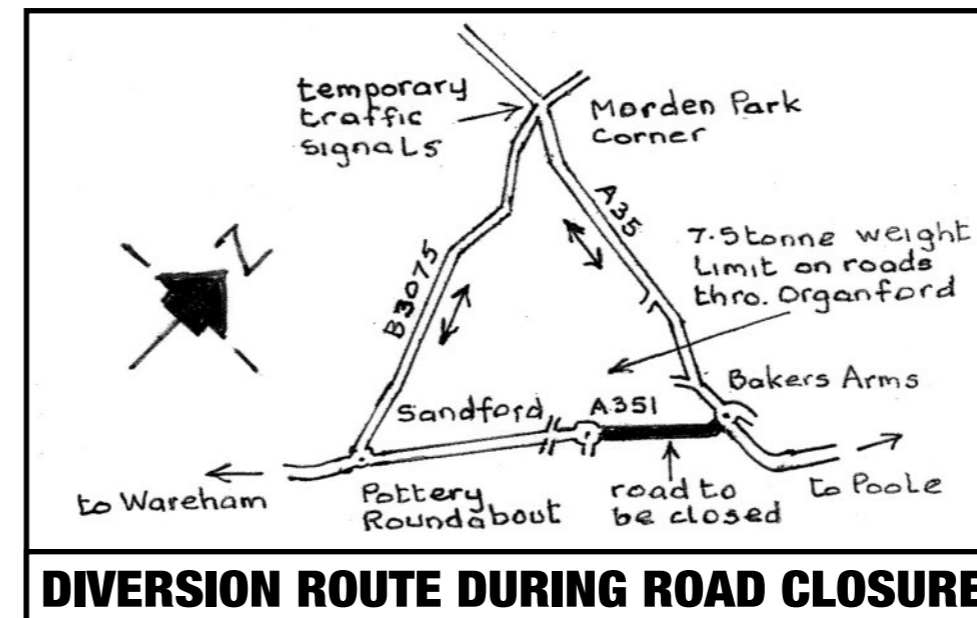
ROAD CLOSURE - DELAYS LIKELY

Wareham drivers will be among those who are likely to face delays and longer journey times when the A351 Wareham Road between Bakers Arms Roundabout and Blackhill Roundabout at Holton Heath is closed to through traffic from 19th September for up to five weeks for major repairs, reports County Councillor David Budd.

The work will include rebuilding King's Bridge over the Sherford River near Bakers Arms, drainage works to alleviate flooding problems and the removal of the existing road surface and resurfacing a one mile section of the road.

Traffic will be diverted along the A35 and B3075 roads via Morden Park Corner where temporary traffic signals will be provided as was the case in October 2007 when the road between Sandford and Holton Heath was closed for reconstruction.

Delays are inevitable says David, but would have been far worse if the County Council had pressed ahead with their original plan to carry out the work in June! Fortunately common sense prevailed and the work was moved to later in the year, but no time is a good time to close the main road in and out of Purbeck.



DIVERSION ROUTE DURING ROAD CLOSURE

PURBECK CHANGES

LEADERSHIP

Liberal Democrat Councillors have stepped down from the leadership of Purbeck District Council as a consequence of the Conservatives victory by 70 votes in the Lytchett Matravers by-election on 7th July.

The Council is now comprised of 12 Conservatives, 10 Lib Dems and 2 Independents.

Council Leader David Budd tendered his and Lib Dem colleagues resignations from their leadership roles at the August Council Meeting, where upon the Conservatives took control.

Wareham Lib Dem Cllr Eric Osmond's position as Chairman of the Council is not effected by the change in leadership.

David Budd told the Council "It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the district as Leader of the Council".

David has asked Focus to let it be known that a rumour that he has resigned from the Liberal Democrat Party is untrue - he has only resigned as Leader of the Council.

More Councillors for Purbeck?

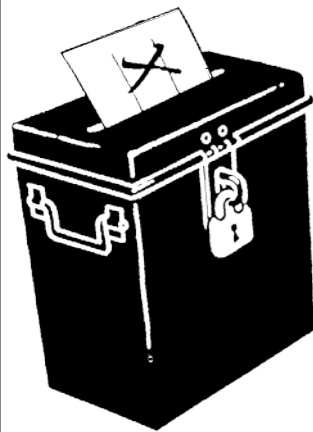
The number of councillors elected to Purbeck District Council could be increased and the areas they represent changed.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a review of the district because of the wide variation in the number of electors each councillor represents on the Council, which is seen to be unfair and undemocratic. Wareham however currently has the right ratio of electors to councillors.

The Commission has told the Council it is minded to increase the number of councillors from 24 to 27 to reflect current workload, future governance arrangements and the fact that the Council elects a third of its number three years out of four. However, councillors are very concerned about the additional £16,000 per year cost of the three additional members who will be elected from May 2014.

Last December the Lib Dems proposed moving to whole Council elections every four years which would have saved significant sums of money, but this was rejected by the Conservatives a number of whom are now openly regretting their decision.

The Commission will be consulting all interested parties including the public at various stages of the process reports Cllr Keith Critchley who is a member of the Council's cross-party group formulating the Council's response to the Commission.



LIBRARIES TO CLOSE

BUT Wareham to host Tourist Information Centre?

Wareham Library is not affected, but nine rural Dorset libraries are to have their funding withdrawn by Dorset County Council and will close unless a parish council provide the money to keep its local library open.

All Lib Dem Councillors, plus a few Conservatives and one Independent voted to keep all 34 Dorset libraries open, but were defeated 21 to 20 votes by a majority of Conservatives.

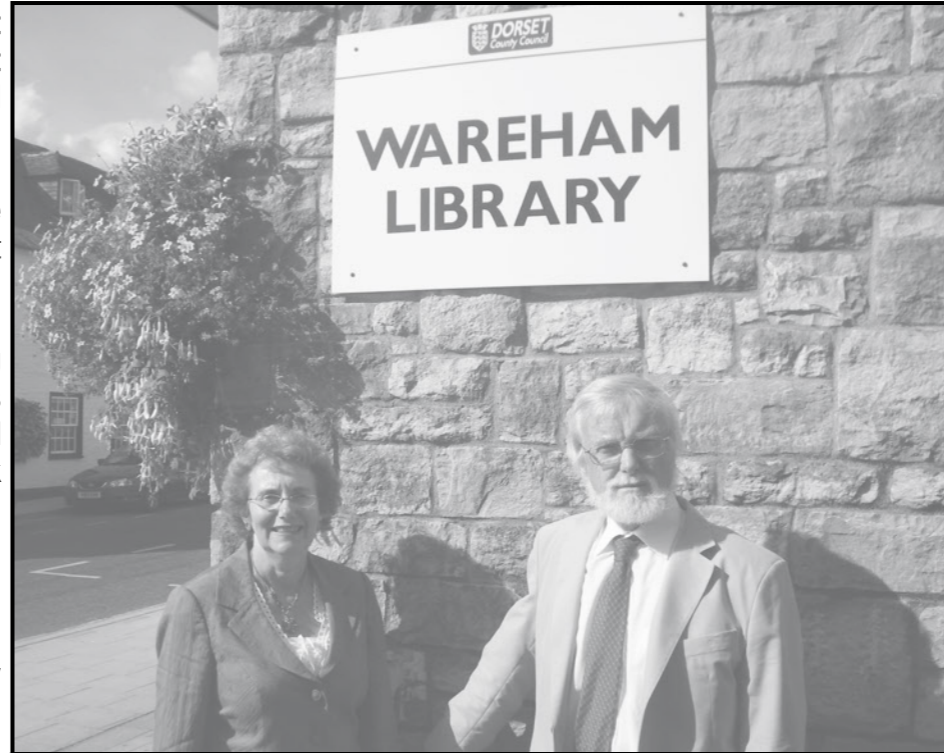
Annette Brooke MP who attended the County Council Meeting said "with the great need to improve our children's literacy skills it is a nonsense to close libraries when Dorset clearly could make management savings and efficiencies in book purchasing".

Wareham Plans

Plans to move the Tourist Information and Heritage Centre from Holy Trinity Church across South Street to Wareham Library have been revealed by Purbeck District Council.

The Church who own the building are exploring using it for a youth project, which requires the Council to vacate, who in turn have been in discussions with the County Council about sharing space in the library.

The move would mean that the library would be open for longer to access the self service library facilities, has the advantage of a ramped access for those with mobility problems and would significantly reduce the District Council's running cost.



Moving the T.I.C to the Library will help safeguard the future of both says Annette Brooke MP and Councillor David Budd

Concerns have been expressed about the impact on tourism generally and the loss of public access to a quality heritage building. The plans are subject to approval by the full council in September.



PLANNING PURBECK'S FUTURE

Following public consultation in late 2010 Purbeck District Council has amended its Core Strategy – Planning Purbeck's Future, which will guide development in Purbeck for the next 15 years.

There will be a further opportunity for the public to comment, but only on the changes, between 1st September and 13th October before the strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The document will be available at the Town and District Council Offices, the Library and on the Website dorsetforyou.com

In other news....

FOOD WASTE COLLECTION DELAYED

It was hoped that a weekly food waste collection could be introduced across the Purbeck District by the end of the year when the Council joined the Dorset Waste Partnership in April, but it has not proved possible to introduce a service at this time of severe financial constraints at a cost the partnership can afford.

The partnership is currently working on a Dorset wide uniform collection service to replace a variety of current arrangements across the county, which will improve the services provided and at the same time reduce cost and waste sent to landfill.

The new service which will include a food waste collection will be fully implemented in Purbeck in 2013 at the end of the current contract with SITA.

IMPROVING PLANNING

District Councillors David Budd and Keith Critchley and Town Councillor Carol Turner are among eight members appointed to a panel reviewing the way Purbeck Council's Planning Board determines planning applications. "The aim is to improve the many aspects of the decision making process" said Keith Critchley.

ADVICE SURGERY

Annette Brooke MP assisted by a local Councillor holds regular surgeries in Wareham library.

Please call Annette's office on 01202 693555 to make an appointment.