



DAPTC MEMBER COUNCIL NEWS

Gillingham Town Council

Town takes over road verges

From April 2015, Gillingham Town Council, in North Dorset, will be responsible for maintaining all the road verges in the town after taking over the service from Dorset County Council.

The County Council had come under fire for reducing its grass cutting service to just six cuts a year, meaning grass could go uncut for several weeks in wet weather. A total of 5.5 acres of road verges will now be cut far more often. The County has provided a small sum of money to help pay for new cutting equipment.



Town Mayor David Milsted said: "Our agreement with the County is for 7 cuts a year but in reality we shall be cutting far more often, to keep the grass neat, short, and easy to manage. Our residents will see a huge improvement on last year now that our own Town Council staff are doing the work."

Earlier this year the Town Council took over all the planted areas along Le Neubourg Way and at the Lodbourne roundabout. The council is keen to improve the appearance of this 'gateway to Dorset' off the A303. The Town Council is not being paid by the County to do this work.

Gillingham Town Council now looks after 74 acres of public land in the town, most of which requires grass cutting. An additional member of staff and an apprentice will shortly be appointed to meet this increase in work.

Pictured: Town council staff cut back overgrown shrubbery along Le Neubourg Way.

Blandford Forum Town Council



blandfordplus challenges strategic plan for its area.

Blandford + consists of Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council, Bryanston Parish Council and the DT11 Forum Community Partnership and was formed in 2013. Since then the group has been working together to try to secure the opportunity to let the local community decide how to shape its own community. Despite being an uphill battle the group has persevered and has secured a chance to speak at the Local Plan Hearing. In preparation it has engaged with the community to gather its views and with the help of a professional planning consultant, rCOH Ltd, it has submitted a statement to the Inspectorate presenting these views.

While anxiously awaiting the outcome, the group will be preparing a Draft Plan for consultation before submitting a Pre-Submission Plan for its own examination. The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan being that in 2030 its area can be described as follows:

"Blandford Forum has grown to become a more successful and sustainable town providing a wider range of homes, jobs, shops and facilities to meet all the needs of the local community.

Blandford St. Mary and Bryanston have remained at their current size as small but viable communities. The tourism potential of the area has been realised, which has led to new local employment opportunities.

Change in the local landscape has been managed to sustain its special character and the ways in which it helps define the character of the town and villages. The special historic and architectural character of the Blandford Forum, Blandford St. Mary and Bryanston Conservation Areas and the Listed Buildings that help define each place have been sustained and enhanced.

The local communities are able and are encouraged to walk, cycle and use public transport for their trips within and beyond the area." (An extract from the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Vision prepared by rCOH Ltd)

The Neighbourhood Plan process has encouraged three parishes to work together and opened up doors in partnership working in other ways. The group intends to continue working together following the publication of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it secures its vision for 2030.