We’ve decided to re-brand the quarterly newsletter as a magazine. It has grown so much in size over the past year due to all the interesting and informative articles you are sending in, the title of newsletter no longer does it justice. Please continue submitting your articles for future magazines.

Do you know of a lonely ‘phone box seeking adoption?  
(See pages 8 and 9 for some success stories)

The Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils provides advice, support, training and assistance to its member councils. The advice and support offered by DAPTC is backed-up by the Association’s links with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to which it is affiliated. Please feel free to contact us between 9am and 2pm at the address shown below:

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Quarterly magazines are available in full colour on our website at www.dorset-aptc.gov.uk/circulars.html
Members of staff gain Health and Safety Awards

Eight members of staff at Gillingham Town Council recently gained Health and Safety Awards following a review of the council’s policies and procedures. All eight obtained a Level 2 Health and Safety in the Workplace QCF Award, with four senior staff – Town Clerk Sylvia Dobie, Assistant Town Clerk Clare Ratcliffe, Senior Customer Services Officer Julie Hansford and Works Manager Simon Dobie – going on to gain Level 3 Award after a week-long training course. Cllr Dennis Griffin, of the Council’s Health and Safety Working Party, also attended the training and achieved a Level 2 Award.

The training was accredited by the Ofqual-regulated Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance, and directed by Roger Weeks CMIOSH, owner of local company Vale View Safety Ltd. Mr Weeks said: “There is no doubt that investing in this training achieves excellent results, and some of the lessons learned have already been put into practice.”

Gillingham Town Council has registered for the new Local Council Award Scheme Foundation (Gold) Level, having previously achieved Quality Status in 2010, and regularly reviews all its policies and procedures including the Health and Safety Policy.

Town Clerk Mrs Dobie said: "We all need to be up to the mark in all aspects of the varied work we do in the community and working towards the Local Council Award Foundation (Gold) Level will help us to achieve this."

Mayor of Gillingham David Milsted said: “Our Council has a well-earned reputation for being orderly, efficient and effective. We are all committed to reviewing and improving all the things we do on behalf of residents.”

Pictured: Roger Weeks (Centre) with the Town Clerk Sylvia Dobie, and the staff at Gillingham Town Council.

Chickerell Town Council

Solar farm funding for Chickerell

A lump sum towards community projects has been offered to Chickerell Town Council by a solar energy company.

British Solar Renewables is planning to give up to £50,000 one-off payment to the Town Council for capital projects as a community benefit payment when its solar farm is accredited by OFGEM to be built at Chickerell.

DCC Renewable Energy Team have been able to advise the Town Council, which has decided to accept the offer. A member of the team gave a presentation at the DAPTC Clerk’s seminar in September, which gave the Town Clerk a useful contact for more information.

Community benefit from large scale renewable energy projects are rapidly becoming government and industry policy and standard practice.

In a Department of Energy and Climate Change publication, Government Minister Ed Davey is quoted as follows: “Communities hosting renewable energy policy play a vital role in meeting our national need for secure, clean energy and it is absolutely right that they should be recognised and rewarded for their contribution.”
On Monday 23 February 2015 Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council, in Purbeck, held a civic reception for Dorset Town Mayors and Chairmen, and community leaders. The event was held to celebrate the inaugural lighting of the heritage beacon, a project undertaken by the Town Council and sponsored by Harbour View Burial Ground (Tappers Funeral Service). The aim of the project was to celebrate the area’s history as a beacon town.

The new heritage beacon, sited on the Upton Library grounds, accompanied by an information board, was switched on by Mr Steven Tapper, followed by a trumpet fanfare and a specially written poem read by the Town Crier of Wareham.

Guests were invited on a town centre tour to see further recent innovations, including a WW1 sculpture specially commissioned for the 100 year anniversary, plus community WW1 bench and improved town centre lighting and the flood lit clock tower.

Town Mayor, Cllr Mrs June Richards said in her speech to guests ‘As first Mayor of Lytchett Minster and Upton, I am delighted to welcome you to our first civic event, to celebrate the lighting of the beacon’. Furthermore, the event was hosted by Waypoints Care Group at its new dementia care home in Upton, and was the first time it had been opened to visitors.

The event concluded with a drinks reception provided by Waypoints Care Group, with visitors able to take guided tours of the new care home and to see the state of the art facilities and witness first hand the attention to detail that has gone into making this a home where ‘people can live well with dementia’.

DAPTC MEMBER COUNCIL NEWS
Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council Hosts an Evening of Firsts

The Beacon Heritage Project
Ferndown Town Council is on the move

After 15 years of attempting to move to the town centre, Ferndown Town Council, in East Dorset, were delighted when East Dorset District Council’s Community Committee, voted to agree the sub-letting of part of Ferndown’s Barrington Centre to the Town Council, heralding a new era for the local authority.

Currently renting an office in the King George V Pavilion in Peter Grant Way, the Town Council has been out of reach for many residents especially those with disability and limited access to transport. Town Clerk, Vanessa Ricketts, said: “This move will enable us to provide a better service to a greater number of Ferndown residents and therefore deliver better value for money. At present we are out of town and many people struggle to get to us. Whilst our current location is very pleasant, it’s not enabling us to fully deliver on our customers’ needs.”

Undoubtedly the KGV campus at Peter Grant Way is beautifully kept and managed and Vanessa is keen to assure residents that she will continue to oversee the Charity in her role as Administrator and manager of the groundstaff, led by Head Groundsman, Keith Wilcox. She explains: “I will continue to have daily meetings with Keith and the team at the Pavilion. We all start early and this will enable me to meet with the team before heading to the Council Offices at the Barrington.”

The Town Council has had a lease agreement with King George V Charity to rent its Pavilion office and this expires in April giving a golden opportunity for the Council to look for alternative accommodation. Thanks to the Barrington Centre’s Management Committee, a move was agreed which will be mutually beneficial. The Chairman of the Barrington Centre, Chris Allen, explained: “We are extremely pleased to be welcoming Ferndown Town Council into the Barrington Centre. This is the start of a new era in the Barrington’s history and a very good demonstration of how the Centre is adapting to a more modern way of benefiting the community it serves. Not only are we growing our Community engagement levels and theatre shows, but we are establishing new ways of running our charity business model to ensure that the Barrington continues to grow to bring new members of the wider Community into the Centre, and by doing so it makes us a very useful asset to the town”.

The move, and any associated costs, will be met from the Town Council’s existing reserves so as not to be a burden on the precept.

The Town Council moved offices just after Easter on Tuesday 7th April. The move was in plenty of time for the elections and new Council term. Meetings of the Town Council will continue to be held in the Recreation Room at KGV Pavilion for the time being, until such time as an arrangement can be made to use the Barrington’s Conference Room.
**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**

**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.
Alderholt (in East Dorset) held its Annual Parish meeting on 18th March 2015, which was incredibly successful with over 100 residents in attendance. This is the largest attendance I’ve seen in the 12 years that I have been clerk.

The meeting had been advertised all over the village and promoted local council projects including the local elections, a new solar farm, a new housing development, a rebuild project at the recreation ground, a new scout building and a skate park project. Wine and nibbles were served with various stands for residents’ perusal and several speakers also in attendance. Two residents have now put themselves forward as Councillors following the meeting. Overall, a very successful evening although we are now under pressure to make it even bigger and better next year!!

Maria Humby, Clerk

Sherborne Town Council

Flying the Flag for the Commonwealth
Sherborne Town Council expressed an interest in taking part in the Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth event prior to the 2014 event, to be informed that Parish and Town Councils would not be involved until 2015.

Soon after the 2014 event a formal approach was made to the organisers asking if Sherborne Town Council could be involved in 2015. This resulted in Sherborne Town Council being invited to be the first Parish/Town Council in England to sign up to and commit to the 2015 event.

The organisers invited The Mayor of Sherborne to provide a quote for inclusion in the promotional literature sent to all Parish and Town Councils. The Town Mayor Cllr Andrews was quoted as follows: ‘We are delighted to be taking part in this exciting initiative, and encourage all other town councils to do likewise’.

Tower of London poppies coming to Sherborne
Sherborne Abbey is displaying poppies from the Tower of London to commemorate the town’s fallen.

The poppies are two of the 888,246 original ceramic poppies made for the art installation ‘Blood swept lands and seas of Red’.

They were among those planted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Sherborne at the Tower of London’s dry moat in September 2014 to commemorate soldiers from Sherborne who fought in the First World War.

The Mayor and Mayoress presented them to Canon Woods of Sherborne Abbey. The poppies are on display in the Ambulatory with the Regimental Books
Environmental projects underway

Burton Bradstock PC (in West Dorset) have recently undertaken environmental projects - such as hedge-laying and tree planting - which it feels provides an exemplar for other Parish Councils looking to safeguard and enhance their natural environment and encourage local residents to become actively involved in healthy outdoor practical activities.

When the 3ha of riverside meadows were put up for auction in 2012 the Parish Council took the bold decision to raise the funding to be able to bid for the land. Quick action and lots of local landowner support ensured the Parish Council were successful in buying the land thereby safeguarding well used rights of way, amenity space and the rural setting for the village conservation area.

With the further support of a Parish Plan consultation the PC formed a volunteer Working Group in 2014 to take on the job of agreeing a management plan for Corncrake and organising practical conservation activities.

The Volunteer group have since held awareness raising public meetings, gathered data on species and conservation management options and held successful practical conservation days laying hedges and planting 30 native fruit trees.

The Working Group comprises some 10 local residents and volunteer days attract up to 20 people keen to learn about nature and help with practical work. The Group has received excellent support from Dorset Countryside Service. The Group plan more tree planting and hedge-laying in the future as well as re-establishing hay meadow management to increase wildflowers.

Michele Harding, Clerk to Burton Bradstock PC

Youth shelter relocates

The 22-seat youth shelter has finally been relocated from outside West Moors Youth Club to alongside the skate park nearby. The hexagonal shelter was dis-assembled, moved, re-painted and upgraded. West Moors Parish Council hope it will continue to provide a safe place for youngsters to meet away from local residents and businesses.

It comes complete with solar panels to power a light, activated by a movement sensor.

The Project was led by PC Julian Humphries. Most of the cost was funded by Synergy Housing with the remaining expenditure met by the Parish Council.

The skate park is very popular amongst the teens so West Moors Parish Council hope the shelter will be more widely used in the new location.
Telephone kiosk ‘adoption’

Further to several enquiries recently to DAPTC regarding adopting unused BT phone kiosks within parishes and towns, we thought you might like to see some examples from around the County, of kiosks which have been adopted already.

Wakeham’s ‘phone kiosk (on Portland) was adopted and is looked after by its Friends group.

Photos above show, left to right: the kiosk before ‘adoption’, at the opening ceremony and decorated for Christmas.

David Redwood, Chairman of Fifehead Magdalen Parish Meeting, in North Dorset, explains why the decision to adopt their kiosk was made and what it involved.

As with so many iconic red telephone kiosks that one sees almost daily, ours had for quite a few years looked rather sad, tired and tatty. Since the 1930s the kiosk has been a central feature of the village being “guarded” by those bastions of ancient Dorset villages, namely The Old Rectory, The Old Post Office and The old School House. Thus it was that purchase (aka adoption) of the kiosk appeared as an agenda item at the next Parish Meeting and the assembled parishioners voted overwhelmingly to make plans to adopt the kiosk and forthwith to restore it to its former glory.

BT confirmed that the only calls made from the phone in the preceding three years were by engineers testing the line. Therefore, in the knowledge that it was essentially redundant an application to adopt the phone was made to BT. The contract was drawn up and signed and then we waited for the statutory 90 days after which time North Dorset District Council gave an approving nod. At this point the telephone was removed and Fifehead Magdalen Parish took vacant possession.

After searching the Web for hints and tips from like-minded parishes, we purchased some red oxide paint and Tekaloid 318 coach enamel, in the official colour (538) Post Office Red. To cut the story short, within a few weeks the kiosk was rubbed down, twice coated with the primer and finally coated with the red enamel. The crown motif was picked out in gold acrylic and the pedestal in black enamel. Fortunately our kiosk was in good shape so no costly spare parts were required and as a bonus we had enough paint remaining to spruce up the adjacent post box.

Total cost was £1 for the kiosk and approximately £40 for paint and materials.

Continued on next page
Telephone kiosk ‘adoption’

Continued from previous page

The Deanland ‘phone kiosk in Sixpenny Handley, in East Dorset, was adopted by the Parish Council and is maintained by the Community of Deanland.

The Deanland Telephone Kiosk is consistently used by locals as a landmark for visitors – “turn left to Newtown after the telephone kiosk”, “on the right just after the telephone kiosk”, or “if you reach the telephone kiosk, you’ve gone too far”. Indeed it is the telephone kiosk which differentiates Deanland from two other neighbouring localities with which it is always being confused – the hamlet of Dean which is the other side of Sixpenny Handley, and Dean Lane which is a thoroughfare of Sixpenny Handley. Strangers are advised that if they do not see a red telephone kiosk, they are in the wrong place!

But it is at night that the telephone kiosk takes on another role, one which it has played for the last 60 years. Deanland of course has no street lighting whatsoever, and it is easy on a dark winters night to become disorientated on foot. Even though the telephone itself has been disconnected, the telephone kiosk still remains illuminated, acting as a beacon for anyone visiting a neighbour on foot along the dark road. It is therefore still very much part of the Local Heritage. The Community of Deanland stepped forward to restore the Kiosk adopted by the Parish Council who were pleased that an enthusiastic group were keen to maintain the Kiosk.

To start the restoration, a public tea-party was held in Deanland for all the local residents on the Queen’s Jubilee week-end with all proceeds being assigned to the telephone kiosk. About £65 was raised, and a team of volunteers was assembled to undertake the restoration. The major work was to clean the telephone kiosk, repair the door closure and then strip off the old external paint which had blistered badly, rub it down thoroughly, repair the glazing and then re-paint. This first stage of the work was finally completed in June 2013. The next stage was to clear the undergrowth and trees from around the telephone kiosk to make it more open and visible as it had been in the past. Over the years of neglect, a lot of saplings, elder bushes and brambles had spread over the bank around the telephone kiosk, which all had to be cleared away.

It was the local Community who decided how the Kiosk would be best used and a local craftsman was appointed who gave careful thought to the internal design, with the following brief:

i) To propose a design to enable literature about the AONB, the RSPB and the Ramblers Association, among others, to be displayed and stocks to be stored.
ii) To include provision for the promotion of local events, businesses, clubs, shops and other facilities in the parish.
iii) To use materials that would be sympathetic to the project.
iv) To include capacity for a simple First Aid box and perhaps a Guest Book.

A fantastic effort by all involved!
Setting up your Parish or Community website

A trailblazing initiative has been taken by the Cerne Valley Parish Council and the local community. Not content with being the first Parish in Dorset to complete their Neighbourhood Plan, the resulting local Business Group embarked on a new web-based portal to act as an umbrella site through which all the local existing specialist websites could be accessed. This also created the opportunity to “brand” the valley as a tourist destination, featuring of course the internationally known Cerne Giant as the central theme. You can explore the site at www.cernevalley.co.uk

Information for Visitors on What’s On, Local events, Things to do, Places to stay or eat, local transport, weather forecasts and lots more can all be accessed through the site. The key to the ongoing success and viability of the site is the inclusion of a local “Directory”. This provides a place for local businesses to promote their services and provide links to their own websites.

From the Parish Council perspective, a series of pages have been included to enable the Clerk to maintain details of local meetings and other specialist areas of local responsibility for easy access by the community. Chairman of the Cerne Valley Parish Council, Ian Humphreys, said “I welcome this initiative taken by representatives from the local business community. The Parish Council and the Village Hall provided the start-up finance needed to get the portal off the ground and a team of local people have done the work. The result enables us to make information easily available not only to the local community but also to improve the attractiveness of the Valley to visitors and potential new businesses.”

Having done extensive planning and consultation regarding the portal, the team are now able to offer an advisory service to other councils who may wish to follow their example. Anyone interested should email cernevalleyportal@gmail.com for more information.

Pictured: a screen shot from the Cerne Valley website