

Gillingham Ward Monthly Report
Cllr Belinda Ridout – November 2024

Northern Area Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, 5th November.

Planning application P/OUT/2023/06654 – Land at Sandways Farm, New Road, Bourton. Demolition of barns and erection of up to 30 no. dwellings and provision of site for village hall with parking area, wildlife area, attenuation pond and public open space (outline application to determine access only). This application was refused, contrary to Case Officer's recommendation, on the grounds of being contrary to development policies within the Bourton Neighbourhood Plan and North Dorset Local Plan.

Appeal Decisions

Former Co-op store and car park, High Street, Gillingham. To demolish a 1427sqm co-op, which had stood vacant for 10 years following fire-damage and replace it with 42 residential units comprised of 4 houses, 30 apartments and 8 assisted living apartments (C2), 83sqm of commercial space (Class E) and communal gardens.

Appeal Procedure: Written Representations. Decision : The appeal was allowed – with the inspector finding that there would be no harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre and that the reduced level of affordable housing had been evidenced by a robust viability assessment. Therefore the proposal would comply with the relevant affordable housing and town centre policies.

Agricultural Building at Paddock Farm, Bowridge Hill, Gillingham The conversion of redundant rural buildings to two dwellings.

Appeal procedure: Written Representations. Decision: Dismissed – the inspector found that the site was not a suitable location for two dwellings, taking into account local and national policy for the re-use of existing buildings, the site being physically separated from Gillingham by open countryside. The proposal would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape and would significantly harm the rural, agricultural setting of the development.

Private Fostering – something perhaps many of us wouldn't know or think about it at the time, but if you have a young person living with you who is not a close relative, then this is called a 'private fostering' arrangement. Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is living with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. This could be a friend, a great aunt, a cousin or someone else known to the child or young person. Dorset Council is keen to encourage people to come forward if they know of a young person who is living under a private fostering arrangement. For queries/concerns about private fostering, please contact the Family Support and Advice Line on 01305 228558 or contact the Fostering Team if you want to speak to the lead contact for private fostering and you are a social worker or from another local council: fosteringenquiries@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, 01305 225568.

Low Carbon Dorset – Dorset Council has been hosting a £1.356m UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund project from April, 2023, ending March 2025. The project offers free technical support and grant funding to organisations across the council area for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to help reduce costs and carbon emissions. I am pleased to say that £2,342.17 of grant funding has been offered towards an LED upgrade project at Gillingham Medical Practice.

New Street Trading Policy – residents and businesses are being asked to share their thoughts on the proposed new Street Trading Policy. The consultation is open until 26th January, 2025. Street trading is the sale or offering for sale of items in a street (including any road, footway or other area the public have access without payment), but as well as the public highway, it can include publicly accessible areas that are privately owned such as car parks and open spaces. The new draft policy sets out the rules for street trading, including how traders get permission to operate, what can be sold and where trading can take place. It also covers exceptions, enforcement and how to appeal decisions. Share your views online at Dorset Council Street Trading Policy or request a paper copy by calling 01305 838028. For any licensing queries, contact the licensing team at Dorset Council on licensing@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or call 01305 838028.

St Martin's House Extra Care Facility, Queen Street, Gillingham – I have been asked time and again when the St. Martin's facility is to open. Significant work went into the design of the building which, albeit very large, incorporates features from the former St. Martin's House dwelling on the site (controversially demolished to make way for the development) and surrounding vernacular design. I'm pleased to say that at long last the facility is now open to anyone who lives in Dorset, offering 55 one-and-two bedroom apartments at social rent to people who want to live independently, with round-the-clock care and support on hand.

St. Martin's House is Magna's (housing association) first purpose-built Extra Care Housing scheme, developed in partnership with Dorset Council and independent care company Care Dorset. The building has been constructed using modern sustainable building methods to achieve a high level of energy efficiency and I'm pleased the landscaping includes a replacement cherry tree to the front.

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For those residents not on line, who have important questions or concerns, call Dorset Council on 01305 221000, 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week or email: communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. All minutes of meetings can be found on the Dorset Council website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>