

**Gillingham Ward Monthly Report**  
**Cllr Belinda Ridout – September 2024**

**Northern Area Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September.**

Planning application P/OUT/2023/01413 to erect two dwellings and form access between Linden House and Rose Cottage, Wavering Lane West, Gillingham, was Refused on grounds of Principle of Development, contrary to Local Plan Policy 20, not meeting essential rural needs criteria for development in the countryside.

**Winter Fuel Allowance** – the Government’s decision to change who receives the Winter Fuel Payment has been a blow for the elderly and vulnerable residents, especially with energy bills set to rise and the cost of living still high. Dorset has the oldest demographic of any county in the UK, with 37.2% of residents aged over 60 and 29.6% aged over 65 (2021 data). It is important we all help to make our elderly residents aware of what support and help is available to them. Dorset Council’s Cost of Living Fund will be put under increased pressure to provide additional support and funding to minimize the impact of the loss of Winter Fuel Payments for Dorset residents at a time when the council’s resources are already overstretched. Good news that the government has also decided to extend the Household Support Fund over the coming months, which will enable Dorset Council to administer payments to those most in need on behalf of the government. Obviously, eligibility criteria will be applied. There is information and signposting to local organisations, offering help and support on the Dorset Council website or contact Dorset Council 01305 221000. If you are of state pension age (66+) and on a low income, you could be one of thousands of people in Dorset currently missing out on additional income. You could be entitled to claim Pension credit, which can also get other help, such as: housing benefit if you rent where you live, winter fuel payment, support for mortgage interest if you own where you live, Council Tax discount, free TV licence if 75 or over, help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs. Age Concern Gillingham & Shaftesbury can help you with this, 01747 853966 or email: [ageconcern-shaftesbury@btinternet.com](mailto:ageconcern-shaftesbury@btinternet.com), or go to GOV.UK Pension Credit website for further information.

**Upgrading Cooking Skills** – With the cost of living highlighting the need to find cheaper ways to cook, a Dorset based charity, the Friendly Food Club, has been providing cooking courses and workshops across the county. Now, with funding from Dorset Council and Waitrose, the charity is able to expand further by providing free training to equip community groups in rolling out their own courses. The fully funded training is ideal for foodbanks and pantries, community, patient, youth as well as other community-led groups. Community groups are shown all the essential skills needed to run their own cooking sessions safely. To find out more email: [hello@thefriendlyfoodclub.org](mailto:hello@thefriendlyfoodclub.org) or go to [www.thefriendlyfoodclub.org](http://www.thefriendlyfoodclub.org) for more information.

**Kerbside recycling** – great news that food and drinks cartons, as well as foil trays and sheet foil can now be placed in your household recycling bin. Dorset Council is currently the number one unitary council in England for recycling, with 59.1% of waste collected being recycled. Cartons have been difficult to recycle in the past as they are similar to cardboard when sorting mechanically but contain foil/plastic. New processes are now able to separate them, allowing residents to recycle on their doorstep rather than taking to recycling banks in car parks.

### **What is now accepted:**

**Cartons and cardboard tube containers** - empty food and drink cartons (eg. soup, milk, juice, etc) now accepted in the recycling bin/box, alongside the usual paper/plastic/cans etc already collected.

**Cardboard tube** - shaped containers (eg. Curved crisps, hot chocolate, gravy granules).

Make sure cartons are completely empty, flatten, or pop lids back on where possible before placing in the recycling bin.

**Foil - Foil containers** (e.g pie trays, take-away dishes).

**Foil sheets** (eg. To cover food or wrap sandwiches).

**Confectionary foil wrappings** (eg. Easter eggs, inner wrappings of chocolate bars)

**Foil lids** (eg. Yoghurts, noodles)

Residents are asked to rinse foil trays and wipe sheet foil clean if possible and scrunched into a ball before placing in the recycling bin. If it doesn't 'crunch', it cannot be recycled.

Items that look like foil (eg. Crisp packets, sweet/biscuit/chocolate bar wrappers, pet food pouches, etc) are joined with plastic or paper. These should be kept out of recycling.

**Read Easy Blackmore Vale North** – I'm sharing this with you because this is a group I have known for a very long time now and I know first hand the brilliant work they do. They have now produced videos informing people of the work they do in helping people who have difficulty reading. These will be launched at various events over the next six weeks or so. In our area, this will be at the Vicarage School Room, Gillingham, on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2-2.30pm or failing that, Shaftesbury Town Hall, on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1-1.30pm. Or a drop in session to be held in the United Reform Church Hall, Mere, on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 10am-12 noon.

**Belinda Ridout, Councillor for the Gillingham Ward**

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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](mailto:communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk). All minutes of meetings can be found on the Dorset Council website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>