**Gillingham Ward Monthly Report**

 **Cllr Belinda Ridout – May, 2025**

**Community Bus Scheme for Gillingham** – just to report that the drop-in event on Thursday, 24th April between 10am and 3pm in the Chantry Community Office was a great success, attending by over 80 residents coming to find out more and ‘register their interest’ in the proposedscheme, with 140 names collected in total. As a sub-group of The Thee Rivers Community Partnership, our next step is to request the Town Council’s support of the scheme and to apply to Dorset Council for Community Transport S106 funding, provided by the large developments in the town.

**CR2 & CR3 timetable changes** – as reported last month, funding has been provided to return the Saturday service and enhancements to these routes. We have received notification that this is to start on 25th May and updated timetables should be available on the South West Coaches website and at bus stops soon.

**Dorset Council Recycling** has retained its leading position as the number one unitary and disposal authority in England for recycling rates, according to the recently published national data set for 2023/24 by DEFRA. Dorset Council now recycles 60.5% of all the waste it collects at the kerbside, against a national average of 44%. Dorset Council also ranks fifth overall among *all* councils and third place for the lowest residual waste collected per household, with an average of 363kg per household. This reflects the dedication of Dorset residents to recycling, putting things in the right bins and finding ways to cut down on waste, which really is great news.

**20mph application update** – there has been high demand for 20mph limits across the Dorset Council area and timescales have slipped a little. However, as an update received recently from Tony Burden, (Road Safety Manager, Highways), Gillingham’s application for 20mph zones sits in Phase 3, meaning the schemes have received the authority to proceed to Stage 2, Formal Public Consultation. Owing to a limited time period to implement the scheme once legal powers have been granted, the public consultation period will be announced as soon as a delivery timeframe has been established.

**New Funding Opportunities for local community groups** – if you are looking to start a new project that would make a difference for people in your community, Round 9 of the **Community and Culture Project Fund** is now open for applications. This fund offers small grants ranging from £1,500 to £5,000. Applicants must provide a minimum of 20% of their total project costs. The application period **closes on Thursday, 5th June, 2025.** To apply, visit the DC website: Your Community, Community and Culture Project Fund Round 9. The Arts Development Company can offer advice and support with your application. Email: hello@theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk or phone 01305 228528. For help with completing the online form, you can call Digital Dorset Hotline on 01305 221048

Also, the **Small Capital Grants Fund** to improve, adapt, or refurbish community spaces, village play areas, sports pitches, local greenspaces, arts, or museum venues is open for applications. This fund provides one-off grants between £5,000 and £15,000. This grant also **closes on Thursday, 5th June, 2025**. Applicants must provide a minimum of 20% of their total project costs.

Applications must be made on line. Again, The Arts Development Company, as above, can help with an application. If you would like to speak to someone about your project, email: communities@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Always check the criteria for applications first.

**Homes for local People** – At a recent Dorset Council Cabinet meeting the go-ahead was given to increase the supply of affordable homes, using council land and assets and end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Work will start immediately to plan for 100 temporary accommodation properties across Dorset, moving homeless people out of B&B’s’, into locations, where it is needed most, especially important for families with children of all ages. Plans include supported, accessible and adapted homes . To deliver the temporary accommodation, the council will adopt a 10-year lease agreement with an independent provider. This will include homes for single people and families. The council also intends to launch a trial to house people with complex needs by building on small council sites and converting existing buildings.

**Help for relationship matters** – Help is available to parents who are experiencing relationship problems in Dorset. The Support for Inter Parental Communication project offers free relationship therapy to parents in the Dorset Council area who have children of any age up to 18 (25 where young people have special educational needs or disabilities). The project has been extended until next spring and 91% of patents found it to be very helpful in resolving their relationship issues. Please contact: relationshipsmatter@dorsetcouncil.gov. or visit your local family hub. Our nearest hub is at Sturminster Newton, give them a call first on 01258 920040

You do *not* need to be involved with children’s services to benefit from this service.

**Reporting small collisions or near misses** – you can report all collisions or near-misses online to Dorset Council, even if there is no injury or little damage and no police involvement. Having this information about damage-only, non-injury incidents and near-misses helps Dorset Council identify where road improvements are needed. Near misses, which might be at low speed with another vehicle, a pedestrian or bike and dents, often go unreported. They may be minor, but lots of small incidents at the same location can highlight the need for changes, from something simple such as new signs or bigger, such as a new junction design. All information provided will only be used for gathering evidence to make road improvements. It will not be used for any other purposes. Go online to: **‘Tell us about small collisions or near misses to help us target road improvements’**

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

**Cllrbelinda.ridout@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk** **07496413114**

**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**