

# Dorset County Council February 2014 Report

## Bere Regis School

I am delighted to report that we have finally received approval for the construction of a new school in Bere Regis to accommodate the additional years brought about from the move to a two tier education system. I attended and spoke at length at the meeting that approved the project although there were times when I wasn't sure they would approve it!

The completion date is estimated for mid 2016 although if some of the risks can be managed and mitigated we hope this will be completed ahead of time. The major identified risks are:-

- The acquisition of the land at the end of the plot (needed to move excavated soil from an earlier slope)
- New more onerous building regulations for schools recently introduced
- Access road longer than originally anticipated
- Uncertainty as to the precise ground conditions
- Local infrastructure requirements
- Highways junction works required
- Forecast of greater pupil numbers leading to a requirement for a larger building

I have a clear commitment from the new Director of Education that she will ensure the school is finished as soon as possible and that they will involve the local community where it will be of help to the project. Whilst the delay is disappointing the decision is still very good news. I have had a number of meetings at the school and the Governors are intending to hold communication events soon to inform parents and residents affected by the new school. Obviously this is early days and many questions will not yet be able to be answered as the permission is for an outline of the project - much of the detail remains to be worked up – so please be patient!

## The DCC Budget

The net revenue for DCC, stripping out items that are just being passed through has undergone dramatic changes in the last few years. In 2011 it was £359 Million and by 2016 it will be £259 Million. This means that for every £5 we used to spend we will have only £4 in two years time. This means that we are reviewing every penny of our expenditure to ensure we are spending it as wisely and effectively as we can and that we are focussing on areas of real need. As you may have gathered this is forcing DCC to review all areas of expenditure which is especially tough as nearly half the budget is directed towards services that are required to be statutorily provided that are mainly in the area of childrens services.

## Surgery

Surgeries are held on the first Saturday of every month. These are held at the communal Lounge in Turberville Court in Bere Regis from 09.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. I am now also holding a surgery at Wool in Knowlewood Knapp communal lounge at 11.30. If you have any questions or queries related to the business of Dorset County Council please come along. If anyone wants to contact me and cannot get to the surgery my email address is peterwharf@hotmail.com.

Peter Wharf  
County Councillor