

SUPPORTING PAPERS 31/3/2021

General Operations Committee – Wednesday 31st March 2021

Agenda Item 5.a) – Godlingston Cemetery Extension – update and timetable

TGMS Ltd are appointed to act as the Council's cemetery development consultant to provide technical support for the development of this extension and have to date undertaken topographical surveys and completed the design drawing and technical specification. They will be continuing to provide expertise and assistance with the tender process and construction phase monitoring working closely with the Operations Manager.

Plans for Godlingston Cemetery extension have been agreed and the current project timetable is set out as below.

- 24/03/21 – Tender opportunity advertised on Contracts Finder
- 16/04/21 – Closing date for submission of tenders
- Identification of preferred contractor, pre contract meetings, production of draft contract and contract award
- 21/06/21 – Mobilisation and commencement of the construction phase
- 13/09/21 – Practical completion including seeding, partial release of retention, commencement of the 12 months rectification period
- 12/09/22 – End of “snagging”, release of remaining retention, project sign-off.

Progress will continue to be reported to the Operations Committee as this project continues.

**Gail Percival
Operations Manager
March 2021**



General Operations Committee – Wednesday 31st March 2021

Agenda Item 9.a) - Environmental Matters

a) Tree Planting/Wildflower areas

Twenty-six additional trees have been planted over the winter with two further trees due to be planted shortly. The Operations Team has also supported Sustainable Swanage in planting several fruit and nut trees at the Prospect Park.

Wildflower planting has been undertaken in 3 new locations and enhanced in one existing area.

b) Provision of cycle racks

A sum of £2,500 has been allocated for cycle racks in the 2021/22 budget. The Town Council is being supported by the Active Travel Group (part of Sustainable Swanage) who are undertaking an audit of bike racks in Swanage to identify preferred locations to inform discussion about future potential locations.

c) Downs Local Nature Reserve update

A successful open meeting was held on 23 March 2021 by Sustainable Swanage and the Town Council which detailed results of the recent public consultation and discussions on next steps. Full details of the survey results will be available to view shortly on the Sustainable Swanage website.

In the short term, the Operations team will continue with the mowing programme, initiated last year to ensure a mixture of uncut and cut grass areas. The Operations Manager will work closely with Sustainable Swanage over the summer to develop management plan, required to be submitted as part of the Local Nature Reserve designation process. This will have regard to the feedback from the recent public consultation and existing and future wildlife surveys planned for the coming months.

d) Campaigns

The Council will continue to support Litter Free Coast and Sea with their litter campaigns over the summer.

In relation to dog waste, the Council has been placing updated signage around the town which reflects the Dorset Council Public Spaces Protection Order regulations which came into effect on the 1st January 2021. This Order provides clarity and consistency across the area for dog owners and non-owners alike about dog controls on public open spaces. In addition, we are looking to create stickers which can be fixed to waste bins (subject to confirmation with Dorset Waste Services) to advise that bagged dog waste can be placed within bins that may not necessarily be marked for dog waste only.

e) Energy audit of Council's estate

In March this year a Sustainability Consultant from Green Energy Consulting spent three days surveying the Council's estate to assess opportunities to reduce energy use and

identify appropriate locations for the introduction of sustainable energy generation. This included the Town Hall, Depot, Visitor Information Centre, Beach Gardens pavilion, all public conveniences and Shore Road beach huts. A full report is expected in coming weeks and will be used to determine potential locations for the installation of renewable energy generation and ways in which overall energy use by the Council can be reduced.

f) Drinking water provision

The Council is currently awaiting the result of a grant application to the 'Sea Changers Coastal Fountain Fund' for £2,000 to support the installation of a water refill point located by the public water tap on the hardstanding. The Council will be required to fund the balance of the cost of the fountain as well as the installation. The total cost of this is likely to be around £1,200 and will be funded from the 'drinking water' budget previously approved by the Council. If successful, it is anticipated that the fountain may be operational before May half term.

Gail Percival, Operations Manager
March 2021

Dorset Council are planning to ban disposable BBQs in areas that are high fire risk - will you join us?

Dorset Council are planning to ban disposable BBQs and campfires at Dorset Council's country parks and council land that is deemed a fire high risk such as heathland and dry grassland. A policy aims to be in place to support this work and provide the support for staff on the ground this Summer.

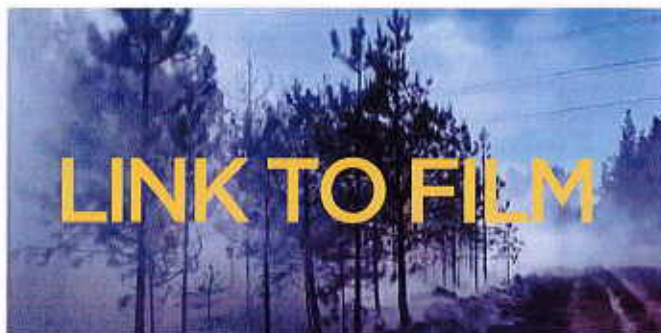
We are asking partner organisations and landowners to join us to help create a clear message for all.

[Click here to view: Disposable BBQ and campfire/wildfire Policy](#)

The fire which started in Wareham Forest on 18 May 2020 is believed to be one of the most devastating forest and heath fires in Dorset in living memory. Declared as a major incident, 430 of Dorset & Wiltshire firefighters attended the incident, together with many from neighbouring FRS's teams coming as far as South Wales. It led to an area the size of over 230 football pitches being destroyed and cost over £800,000. The cause of the fire was believed to be discarded disposable BBQs.

Please click on the link for a video explaining the impact of Wareham Forest Fire in 2020.

There has been an increase in fire incidents relating to BBQs from 18 recorded in 2019 to over 74 in 2020. As well as causing devastating wildfires, littered disposable BBQs can also injure wildlife, staff members and the public.



We are asking for you to join us in banning disposable BBQs and campfires on your land by:

- Working together to create an effective campaign with clear key messaging for residents and visitors.
- Developing a FireWise Voluntary Warden scheme to safeguard residents and support the fire service.
- Work with businesses to remove disposable BBQs from sale.

For more information contact: Bridget Betts

bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01305 224760

Disposable BBQ and campfire/wildfire Policy

Ref. No.	
Category (Y/N)	
People	
Place	
Corporate	
In Constitution	

Policy Details

<p>What is this policy for?</p>	<p>The policy is to prohibit the use of disposable BBQs and the lighting of campfires/wildfires at any of Dorset Council's country parks and other Dorset Council land that is deemed high risk for fire. It also promotes a key message against the general use of disposable BBQ's and lighting of campfires/wildfires across all Dorset Council areas that are deemed to be highly sensitive to fires such as heathland, dry grassland.</p> <p>Through this policy Dorset Council will also call for other organisations and landowners to restrict the use of disposable BBQ's and having campfires/wildfires on their own land where it is deemed to be a fire related risk and/or where there are protected and special habitats and wildlife that would be at risk from fire.</p> <p>The Policy will be used by managers, wardens, officers within Dorset Council including those at each of the country parks to reinforce the clear and consistent message rather than having separate rules and messaging relating to disposable BBQ's use and the lighting of campfires/wildfires.</p> <p>The policy will enable Dorset Council to carry out public communications highlighting this policy to Dorset residents, visitors, businesses and organisations.</p>
<p>Who does this policy affect?</p>	<p>The Policy will affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorset Council Country Parks – Moors Valley CP, Avon Heath CP, Durlston CP and Thorncombe Woods • Other Dorset Council land deemed to be at high risk from fire • Dorset landowners by encouraging them to support this policy • Dorset residents, visitors, businesses and organisations and other landowners
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Disposable BBQ, Campfire, Wildfire, Climate and Ecological Emergency, Environmental Advice, Litter, Fire</p>
<p>Author</p>	<p>Bridget Betts Email: bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>
<p>Does this policy relate to any laws?</p>	<p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) Schedule 2 prohibits activities including that "a person cannot light or tend a fire or undertake any act which is likely to cause a fire." The majority of heathland in Dorset is open access land. Dorset Council, (or where relevant the national park authority) oversees access rights under the CROW Act and may prohibit people from accessing land for 72 hours for failing to comply with Schedule 2 provisions.</p> <p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 covers damage to a SSSI and a person found to have intentionally or recklessly caused destruction or damage can be prosecuted and fined. Dorset Council and/or Natural England may enforce these provisions and institute proceedings for any offence.</p>

	Existing Byelaws - Three Byelaws are currently in place, covering specified areas of Dorset only, which ban lighting of flames, fires and stoves; including the Forestry Commission, National Trust and Weymouth and Portland area. Those organisations can monitor compliance. Non-compliance is an offence under each Byelaw, which can be enforced by the organisations and/or the Police and those found guilty can be fined. These could be actively enforced by the Council and those other organisations who have Byelaws in place. Natural England are currently consulting on a new Byelaw to protect areas of SSSI, which includes a prohibition on use of barbeques and stoves in those areas.
Is this policy linked to any other Dorset Council policies?	Reference number and details of any other Dorset Council policies this policy is linked to, and in what way they are linked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and Ecological Emergency – Reduction in fire related activities and release of CO2, reducing litter will reduce Dorset Councils’ carbon footprint, preventing release will decrease littering which can cause harm to wildlife • Urban Heaths Partnership Management Plan- disposable BBQ’s and campfires can cause wildfires, especially near heathlands • Dorset Waste Partnership Litter Management Policies • AONB Management Plan
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	N/A
Other Impact Assessments	N/A

Status and Approvals

Status	<i>DRAFT</i>	Version	<i>001</i>
Last review date	N/A – New Policy	Next review date	May 2022
Approved by (Director)	Executive Director of Place John Sellgren	Date approved	
Member/ Partnership Board Approval		Date approved	

Disposable BBQ and campfire/wildfire Policy – Putting it into context

Background to the Policy – setting the scene

There has been a significant rise in incidents of fire damage across Dorset as a result of disposable barbecues that have not been disposed of correctly and because of people lighting campfires/wildfires especially on or near heathland and dry wooded areas.

The most serious of these incidents has been the wildfire at Wareham Forest which affected 180 hectares of heathland in 2020 and was declared a major incident by the Fire and Rescue Service. Concern about these fires has resulted in questions being raised about the Council’s role in helping to prevent incidents like this occurring. This policy has been developed with a range of Dorset council officers and partners including Forestry England and the Dorset and Wilshire Fire and Rescue Service. This policy is part of a range of options for helping to reduce wildfires in Dorset.

The Issue

With increased temperatures during the summer months there is an increased risk of wildfires. The better weather means that more people are spending more time eating outdoors and with the price and availability of disposable BBQ's it has meant that there has been a huge increase in their use. This has led to a significant increase in fire related to disposable BBQs in Dorset. Also there has been an increase in wild camping, especially in relation to Covid 19 with more people visiting Dorset that would have previously gone abroad. Wild camping can mean that there is more chance of campfires and cooking outdoors.

The risks from disposable BBQ's not being disposed of correctly and campfires/wildfires not being extinguished correctly include:

- Fire risk to properties and infrastructure near places that are considered high risk e.g. visitor centres and heathlands
- Risk to life from wildfire. Risk to staff that's not necessarily life threatening, such as burns and smoke inhalation.
- Risks to rescue services when having to deal with wildfires
- Fire risk damaging habitats and species
- Risks to livestock and animal health through fire risk
- Impacts on the environment e.g. littering on land, discarded coals in the soil and in lakes
- Impact to other users of the sites, such as the smoke generated by BBQs.

National Policy

The UK Government currently has no policy on disposable BBQ's and campfires although there is mounting pressure from others for such bans to be put in place.

July 2020 Rebecca Pow (Conservative) stated "There are existing powers in legislation which can be used by authorities to regulate and prohibit the lighting of fires on Access Land in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks. Current 'Byelaw' legislation allows for local authorities to restrict and enforce the use of disposable barbecues in parks and public spaces. The Government has no plans for additional legislative proposals to introduce a seasonal ban on the use of disposable barbecues.....an updated Countryside Code which advises not to have barbecues or fires is being produced" <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-07-01/67540>

What other councils are doing?

There is mounting pressure from others for such bans to be put in place – Although not a council this campaign did involve the council but was a partnership brought together by the Peak District National Park. By working together, they promoted a key message against BBQ's in the forest and many retailers stopped selling disposable BBQ's as a result. <https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/news-and-publications/latest-news/3094-crackdown-on-disposable-barbecue-use>

Challenges

The main challenge of introducing this policy is the issue of enforcement. While enforcement can be difficult having a clear policy means that there is a clear and consistent message from Dorset Council that can be cited by the staff working at any of the DC locations. This greatly helps with enforcing this policy and provides the backing from DC to approach members of the public who are not adhering to or aware of the rules. While not all members of the public will adhere to the new policy it is suspected that it will help to reduce the number of incidents.

Effective communications around the policy and visible signage will help overcome any challenges. Community engagement will be key so that residents can act as messengers to communicate the ban to wider audiences within and outside Dorset.

Disposable BBQ and campfire/wildfire Policy – Dorset

The following items/activities are included within this policy:

- The use of disposable BBQ's
- The lighting and campfires/wildfires

This Council prohibits the use of a disposable BBQ and the lighting of campfires or wildfires on Dorset Council land including their three Country Parks. These include:

- Moors Valley CP
- Durlston CP
- Avon Health CP

In addition:

- Thorncombe Woods.
- All other Dorset Council areas deemed at high fire risk – these areas are related to heathland, meadowland, uncut grassland or areas where there is evidence of fire risk

Criteria for deciding if a site should allow/ban disposable BBQ and campfires/wildfires:

- Habitat type – Is the habitat susceptible to wildfire? (Example; heathland, grassed sand dunes, long meadow grassland would be considered at risk. Amenity grassland, beach, would be low risk)
- Have there been any incidents of wildfire within the past 5 years?
- Is the site vulnerable to antisocial behaviour?
- Is there good emergency access onto the site?
- What is the fuel load like? (is the vegetation dense/thick without any fuel breaks, are the species highly flammable? Example, gorse)
- Is there any contamination on site that would increase risk (example: old landfill site)?
- Neighbouring land use should be considered. Does it increase the risk? Example, fuel station

Litter and Waste - Additionally this policy will help with litter issues associated with disposable BBQ's that are not disposed of responsibly as well as reduce the amount of waste in public bins.

Monitoring, Assessment & Review - The Council will have clear signage and messaging at each site and be available on the DC website, and associated CP websites, relating to the prohibited use of disposable BBQ's and the lighting of campfires/wildfires. They will inform any group event taking place on DC land, by including relevant information within booking forms and on other promotional materials.

Communications - A communications plan will be formulated and implemented to call for the ban of disposable BBQ's and lighting of camp and wildfires on our land as well as by other landowners across Dorset. It will promote safe alternative activities for the public.

Partnerships hosted by Dorset Council such as Litter Free Dorset will encourage businesses to stop selling disposable BBQs and use community groups to spread the message of the ban to wider audiences.

Review - This Policy will be reviewed each year via an internal audit.

DORSET COUNCIL - PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Cllrs Daryl Turner (Chairman), Les Fry (Vice-Chairman), Pauline Batstone, Ryan Hope, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Val Potheary, Andrew Starr, Roland Tarr and David Taylor

Apologies:

Also present: Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Spencer Flower, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Jill Haynes, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Laura Miller, Cllr Andrew Parry, Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr Peter Wharf

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Karyn Punchard (Corporate Director for Place Services), Graham Duggan (Head of Community & Public Protection), Tracy McGregor (Service Manager for Libraries), Bridget Downton (Head of Business Insight and Corporate Communications), Deborah Smart (Corporate Director – Digital & Change), Lisa Trickey (Service Manager for Digital Strategy and Design) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

29. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

30. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31. Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported that an additional meeting of the committee would be held on 9 March 2021 in order to review a report on 'APSE Review of Waste Services'.

The Chairman provided an update in respect of an issue raised by South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) relating to an operators license associated with waste operations, and following a meeting with the chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and the chairs of the Place and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committees it was noted that the issues had been addressed and that the chairmen were content with the checks and balances introduced.

The Chairman noted that members were being sought to undertake some review work in respect of the future disposal of assets and the council's new website. Volunteers would be sought after the meeting.

32. **Public Participation**

One question had been received from a member of the public and had been made available to the committee and published on the council's website in advance of the meeting.

A copy of the question and the response provided at the meeting is set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

33. **Options for the control of disposable barbeques and other fire related activities**

The committee considered a report of the Environment Advice Manager which set out options to look at both the legislative as well as other alternatives available to control or prohibit barbeques and other fire related activities in the Dorset Council area. The options paper had been put together working with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and other partners.

Councillors discussed the issues arising from the report and reference was made to the importance of working with local members and town and parish councils to consider the particular circumstances of different areas, the use of signage and education in this area, enforcement issues and the need to review the approaches following the summer season.

It was proposed by R Tarr seconded by V Potheary

Recommendation to Cabinet

- (a) Cabinet are recommended to adopt a two-step approach to the control of disposable barbeques and other fire related activities firstly focussing on increasing public awareness about the risks and the wider impacts through campaigns, policies and schemes, then if necessary, introducing legislation which will result in penalties for those in contravention.
- (b) To achieve this Cabinet are recommended to approve the following options:
 - (1) Not to pursue designating areas or Dorset Council areas with a PSPO relating to BBQ's and fire related activities this year but evaluate 2022 (Option 1)
 - (2) Not to pursue having a specific byelaw at this current time (Option 2)

- (3) The Sky Lantern and Balloon Policy and the new BBQ and campfire/Wildfire Policy is adopted by Dorset Council (Option 3)
- (4) Moors Valley to investigate the gas/electric communal style BBQ option with Forestry England later (Option 4)
- (5) Officers to investigate partnership funding options to support having a new Firewise voluntary warden scheme delivered through the Dorset Firewise project (Option 5)
- (6) The campaign and communication work are supported and developed and taken forward for 2021 season in line with any recommendations from this report. (Option 6)
- (7) Dorset council initiate a coordinated approach to the banning of disposable BBQs in agreed high risk area's locations. This work should link with Option 3, 5 and 6 (Option 7).

34. Developing Dorset's Digital Vision

Further to the Place and Resources Overview Committee meeting in December 2020, the draft digital vision had been finalised, and reflected the comments, suggestions and ideas put forward.

The committee considered the issues arising from the report and particular reference was made to connectivity issues and levels of digital access across the Dorset Council area and the important role played by councillors.

It was proposed by L Fry seconded by R Hope

Recommendation to Cabinet

That the Digital Vision and accompanying delivery plan be adopted.

35. Dorset Council Tourist Information Centres - Service Review: Consultation responses and next steps

The committee received a joint report of the Service Manager for Libraries and Head of Business Insight and Corporate Communications, which sought support on the way forward for Dorset Council in respect of its approach to funding and managing tourist information centres. In introducing the report, the Chairman noted that tourist information centres were a discretionary service and there was currently disparity across the council area. Consultation had been undertaken and alternative delivery models were being investigated.

The committee considered the issues arising from the report and strong support was raised in respect of opportunities to look at the 'Visit Dorset' website including how rural areas away from the coast were marketed and the

potential to develop an app for mobile phones. If the recommendations were agreed, existing funding levels would cease at the end of the current financial year, however, there would be continued support and negotiations moving forward.

It was proposed by S Jespersen seconded by A Starr.

Recommendation to Cabinet

That the following recommendations are endorsed:

1. Dorset Council stops directly funding tourist information centres (TICs) in Dorchester, Sherborne and Wareham.
2. Dorset Council continues to work with the Town Councils and/or other local services and will consider one-off support funding for suitable transitional arrangements to reduce the impact of the closure of the TIC on local people.
3. Authority is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place, to agree any support payment arrangements agreed.
4. Dorset Council continues to promote Dorset as a visitor destination through its Visit Dorset website.

36. Place and Resources Overview Committee Forward Plan

Councillors noted the committee's forward plan and the Chairman reported that work was being undertaken to prioritise items for future review by the committee.

Reference was made to a 'Wheels to work' transport scheme. Further discussion would be held between the Chairman and relevant lead member in respect of transport issues generally and how the committee could be involved in this work.

37. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

38. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

APPENDIX 1 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Question from John Calvert

Item 8 Tourist Information Centre Funding

The Executive Summary comments that TICs provide the following key services: ~ free information including maps, local attractions and events, general information about the local area, bus/transport provision and

information about accessibility ~ ticket sales for some transport providers and for local events ~accommodation information and booking for the local area.

As a resident of Dorchester for over 10 years I have used the Dorchester Tourist Information for all these when they were available and I use them in other towns every time my wife and I visit for the first time.

This situation is not recent, there were plans for the TIC to go into the Shire Hall but then there weren't. The obvious next place was the new Library but no plans there. Finally the reorganisation of the Corn Exchange surely offered possibilities.

The response from Dorchester Town Council is sympathetic but seemingly at an early stage.

My question is this - If Tourism is so important for Dorset and in particular for Dorchester why is the Council stopping the funding and releasing the expert staff before agreeing a replacement service?

Some transitional funding is no substitute for proper planning.

Response from the Service Manager for Libraries

Thank you for the question about the TICs. As you have mentioned, the two TICs that were part of the former West Dorset District Council (Dorchester and Sherborne) were part of a service review commenced in 2014/15 by the district council. During an extended review period, some changes were made to the TICs operated by West Dorset District Council including relocating the Dorchester TIC into the town's library in order to reduce the cost to the council in supporting the TIC function. The review was not fully completed before the Local Government Re-organisation work to create the new Dorset Council took priority. Dorset Council has undertaken a review of the Council managed TICs to consider how best to provide this type of service in the future in a fair and equitable way.

Tourism remains important to Dorset Council and the council's Economic Growth Strategy includes support for the tourism sector by developing the 'Visit Dorset' brand and service to support the visitor economy and promote sustainable tourism in Dorset. Dorset Council currently operate and fund three TICs across the county with other TICs being operated at a local level by town/parish councils and/or volunteer support. There is disparity in terms of the council support for TICs across the area and Dorset Council cannot afford to fund TICs across the whole of the area.

In terms of implementing this change, there have already been some initial discussions with the three Town Councils and these discussions will continue particularly once we have a decision about the future provision of TICs. In addition, there is a period of organisational change management process with the workforce that will take a period of several months to complete which provides time for any alternative arrangements with the Town Councils to develop and be implemented.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.21 am

Chairman

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General Operations Committee – Wednesday 31st March 2021

Agenda Item 11.a) - Health and Safety Report since November 2020

Report since November 2020

RIDDOR – no reportable incidents

Incidents and Accidents – One incident reported at the depot.

A consultant from Ellis Whitham, the Council's external health and safety advisors, met with the Operations Manager in October to undertake the annual progress report. Fourteen recommendations were made which included one high priority action. To date six of these, including the high priority action have been completed and the others are either in progress or subject to other mitigation measures e.g. equipment not in operation.

Covid -19 continues to require regular reviews of risk assessments as well as a range of revised working arrangements.

Formal training related to Health and Safety matters completed

Lantra qualification in Chainsaw Maintenance, Cross Cutting and Felling trees up to 200mm diameter- 6 team members

Lighting Signing and Guarding (Chapter 8 overview) - 14 depot team members

Formal training related to Health and Safety matters currently scheduled

Memorial Inspection and Testing – was due to be undertaken in October 2020 but postponed due to Covid-19 and now scheduled for August 2021

Emergency First Aid at Work – (refresher and new certificates) – scheduled for May 2021

Lantra Synthetic Sports Surfaces Maintenance – scheduled for May 2021

Lighting Signing and Guarding (Chapter 8 overview) – April 2021

Gail Percival
Operations Manager
24th March 2021