

Agenda Supplement

Dorset County Council



Meeting: Audit and Governance Committee

Time: 10.30 am

Date: 7 December 2016

Venue: Committee Room 1, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ

Debbie Ward
Chief Executive

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6. Call to Account Ironman 2016 - Feedback from members of the public 3 - 10

To consider feedback received in response to the local press article concerning the Call to Account.

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Feedback and complaints – emails received following publication of report

A	<p>A few years ago the ironman triathlon event was held in and around Sherborne and Yeovil. The event was a full ironman and the cycle route took in a great deal of the cycle route used in 2016.</p> <p>I was the police inspector responsible for planning and coordinating the Sherborne event with the organisers. The event passed off without significant incident and while there was inevitable disruption to local traffic it was kept to a minimum. The event ran successfully there for two or three years as I recall.</p> <p>I can possibly add some value to the inquiry or to the planning phase of next year's event, given my experience of successfully planning the same event in the past. The location may be (slightly) different but the issues are likely to be the same.</p>
B	<p>From the organiser of the Rotary Dorset Bike Ride in aid of Cancer Research UK:-</p> <p>The annual Rotary Dorset Bike Ride in aid of Cancer Research UK which has raised in excess of £160,000 for charity is planned for 17th September 2017 – the same day as the Iron Man event.</p> <p>Our 8 different routes from 10-108 miles clash with the ironman route at Moreton, Puddletown and Piddlehinton and cross at 4 places. To change our routes would take considerable time and effort although we may be able to make some changes. No road closures are needed for our charity event.</p> <p>We had hoped to have had discussion with the ironman team before this meeting but they wanted to finalise their route before any discussions takes place so nothing has been finalised or resolved.</p> <p>We ask you to take our event into consideration when making your decision and request that the Iron Man team to be flexible to ensure our event can take place as well without too many limitations, restrictions or changes.</p>
C	<p>We believe you want to hear any thoughts on the traffic chaos during the Ironman earlier this year. Having been caught in the jam on the No 10 bus to Weymouth to watch the Ironman we decided to get off the bus in Weymouth Avenue and walk to Greys Bridge. On arriving at Greys Bridge we found that the Police Constable directing traffic was maintaining the blockage on the bridge and was directing traffic up London Road towards High East Street. However, the traffic signs for people driving East down High West Street took them into High Street, Fordington resulting in chaos. One man became so irate that the Police Constable at Greys Bridge had to pull him to the side to talk to him.</p>

	<p>We spoke to the Constable and looked at the map he had. It appeared that he came from Gillingham and had absolutely no knowledge of the area. The map he had was the one that was posted through residents' doors to alert them to the Ironman. Even we, with local knowledge, had trouble interpreting the map.</p> <p>We spoke to him at about 12.30 p.m. and suggested rather than directing traffic to the jam in Weymouth Avenue it might be better to send people to Monkey Jump and direct them round the bypass. We could see from Greys bridge that the traffic on the bypass was flowing. On walking home we noticed that the traffic had started to move again.</p>
D	<p>I've written a note (attached) with an account of my experience on the event day. Included are some observations and questions which the public need to have answered.</p> <p>It was with alarm that I read of the possibility of the event returning to the area in 2017. In fairness to the community this must not be allowed to happen. I appreciate that it is only one day but the disruption to community life and traffic was far too great to be acceptable. Please include the attached document in what you pass on to what I hope is an incisive Inquiry:-</p> <p><i>Ironman 2016 - Complaint over the Disruption to the Community</i> Statement of Facts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I live in the Fordington Fields estate, opposite the Trumpet Major public house on the eastern outskirts of Dorchester. On the morning of the event I attended a service at Saint Mary's church in Dorchester. The service ended at about 11:00 hours and I then left to drive home. 2. Owing to the congestion I made slow progress back and it took well over 20 minutes to reach the roundabout at the junction of Prince of Wales and Alington roads. There I found the route barred and was ordered by an aggressive marshal to turn left and go down Alington Road as the road was closed in the easterly direction. At the time the road was empty of competitors but the marshal would not let me proceed. 3. I only needed to drive about 300 metres up the road to the roundabout opposite the Trumpet Major public house to gain entry to the area where I lived. 4. Going down to the junction of Kings Road and London Road I was hoping to turn right towards the Dorchester bypass and enter the town. There I was ordered by a police officer to turn left and go into town. When I asked what route was available to get into the Fordington Fields the officer had no idea.

5. I then went up towards the Bridport Road and found the traffic at a standstill. So I went down the Grove and into Charminster, expecting to be able to drive along the minor road towards the Kingston Maurward roundabout on the Dorchester bypass. This route was barred although, again, no competitor was in evidence.
6. Eventually I found a route back to Dorchester, through Maiden Newton and at about 13:00 hours arrived home, having crawled through almost stationery heavy traffic.

Legality of the Closures

1. In view of the exceptional scale of the road closures were all the legal steps taken to advertise them?
2. More importantly, what steps above the statutory notices were taken to inform potentially affected residents of the inevitable major disruption?
Neither my neighbours nor I received any communication from the Council. In this the Council failed those concerned, to the point where maladministration might be alleged.

Questions and Observations

1. Who was responsible for assessing the pattern, duration and extent of road closures for the event?
If it were officers of the County Council could they not have seen that the closures would inevitably lead to major public disruption and inconvenience? Such lack of recognition smacks of professional incompetence. Will the officers and their Director be summoned before a Council Inquiry to explain their action?
2. To what extent were Dorset Police involved?
Could they not have seen the effects of the closure pattern and of the lack of alternative routes and facilities?
Again this demonstrates gross misjudgement, even incompetence.
Will the Chief Constable be summoned to appear before any Inquiry to explain the actions of her officers?
3. I understand that each competitor paid an entrance fee of approximately £2000 and that there were about 2,500 entrants.
Are these figures correct?
If so, the organisers would have received a great deal of money. They would, I imagine, have been left with a substantial profit even after meeting their expenses.
Did the organisers pay anything to the Council for the work the officers would have necessarily had to do in connection with the event? Was the Police force also reimbursed?

	<p>If so, please can the amounts be made public?</p> <p>If necessary a Freedom of Information requisition will be made to elicit the figures but it is hoped the bodies will make such amounts public without this.</p>
E	<p>What are Ironman and Dorset County Council going to do to alleviate the problems encountered this year during the Iron man event?</p> <p>We write as an agricultural contractor employing twenty tractor drivers working in the Dorchester and Weymouth Area. We were made aware of the Ironman Road Closure timings from an unprofessional Flyer through our post box. All roads in our working area were closed with limited notice to ourselves. In order to reduce the disruption to our business we planned our working day around this by starting work earlier. This was time wasted as all the roads were closed earlier than the communicated times, meaning none of our customer received the service expected. There were no diversions and the Marshalls were under orders to let no one through.</p> <p>This must be a Health & Safety and Welfare issue with no access allowed to animals or to vulnerable people within the community.</p> <p>We were led to believe a one way system would be in operation, following contacting the Ironman helpline prior to the event. Sadly this was an empty promise in addition to an unmanned helpline, on the event day.</p> <p>In addition to all this stress for our business we learned after the event that Ironman had no legal right to close the roads in the way they did.</p> <p>As a small agricultural based business the Ironman event has caused us unnecessary stress and costs and we are unable to see how this event is of any benefit to the surrounding Countryside and Community. Maybe the event should be more localised to Weymouth rather than interrupting the whole of south and central Dorset. We would also suggest that any future event to be held overnight finishing ten o clock the next morning. This would reduce the impact to all the local residents.</p>
F	<p>Could we please have some clarification of the laws governing the use of PA equipment making announcements and pumping out loud pounding music at 6:30am on a Sunday.</p> <p>Since I understand the council has some discretion in these matters, could we please have an undertaking that residents, who do not wish to be disturbed at, what some might consider an unearthly hour, nor to listen to the type of music being played, will be allowed</p>

	to slumber undisturbed. Please note that I live 1½ miles, as the crow flies, from the hub of the event, so the effects of the noise were very far reaching.
G	We are 4 boatmen and harbour traders who are neither for nor against Ironman. It contains Ironman's big business attitude towards us as small traders and ideas to keep us working alongside the Ironman event. A health and safety issue. A criticism of the announcer and his love of his own voice and complete disregard for local residents. Maybe a revised date could be considered.
H	<p>Question 1: According to the Echo the road closures that were put in place were deemed illegal because of non-notification to The Secretary of State. If this is the case whose job was it to do that and seeing as they didn't, did that person(s) and their superiors get reprimanded and what was the outcome of this? ie written warning, demotion, dismissal etc.</p> <p>And were <u>all</u> the closed roads published on the website (or wherever else they were listed)?Also (quoted again from the echo) the council said there are no fines or punishment for failing to comply - does this mean that anyone can shut any roads at any time without any repercussions? This would be handy in the summer when I have a barbeque to stop traffic driving through my village!</p> <p>Question 2: Did Ironman pay any money directly to the council and if so how much and how was this calculated?</p>

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Denise Hunt
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Legal and Democratic Services
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Dorchester
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24th November 2016

Dear Denise Hunt

Re: Audit and Governance Committee “Call to Account” Ironman Event

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd November in response to my letter to Councillor Jones. If possible, depending upon work commitments, our Chairman [REDACTED], is hoping to attend but at present I cannot confirm this.

A suggestion was made by our Committee which might be helpful to your Committee when discussing the matter.

It was suggested that in future, the event could be run more in the way that the Olympic Triathlon was, as this could avoid a lot of problems. Having a circuit with a number of laps, rather than a single extended route for the running and cycling, would limit the affected area significantly and provide hugely enhanced spectator interest and value as competitors' positions would be seen on successive laps. Retaining the circuits south of the Ridgeway would not only limit the disruption to the rest of the county but also give a Weymouth based event a much more distinctive Weymouth flavour and focus.

I would be grateful if this could also be tabled at your meeting on our behalf.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dorchester Rifle & Pistol Club



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