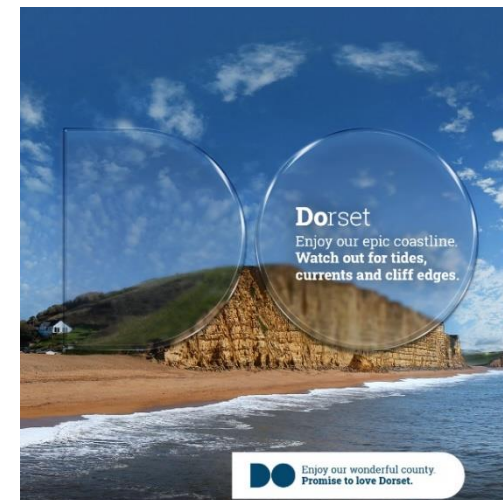


## Evaluation report - Promise to Love Dorset behaviour change campaign



## Background – why did we run this campaign?

Negative experiences during summer 2020 showed that some visitors to Dorset during the pandemic displayed different types of behaviour than we normally expect.

With COVID-19 travel restrictions in place, many people on furlough and a very warm early summer, large groups of young people came on daytrips looking for a beach party atmosphere rather than the usual families and couples who usually come to Dorset on holiday and book accommodation.

High numbers of people concentrated in a handful of beauty spots had a negative effect on Dorset's road network and emergency services were compromised. The issues which arose also created some community tensions, with some local residents upset about negative impacts on the local environment and a growing anti-visitor sentiment.



©Dorset Police

Tourism is worth £1.8bn to Dorset's economy so we were keen to support Dorset's visitor economy and aid recovery from the economic impacts of the pandemic. We knew from our experiences of 2020 that 2021 would be a very busy year for domestic tourism and that we needed to be prepared.

We needed visitors to behave responsibly to avoid the known negatives from the previous year. Balancing the needs of the environment, the economy, our communities and visitors had never been so challenging, and we had an opportunity to create a positive legacy from the COVID recovery funding made available to us.

## **Campaign objectives**

To change visitor behaviour in the following ways:

- To reduce litter
- To reduce number of fires caused by BBQs or campfires
- To reduce instances of illegal parking and camping
- To reduce instances of ASB (like wild toileting)
- To inform visitors of our dangerous coastline and waters and reduce the numbers of people getting into difficulty and requiring emergency services

We also wanted our campaign to:

- Reassure Dorset residents that we listened to their concerns in 2020 and we had a plan in place to manage the number of visitors anticipated
- Maximise commercial and economic opportunities
- Keep people safe
- Protect our natural environment, maximising opportunities for people's connection with it, and encouraging both residents and visitors to have a collective sense of environmental responsibility
- Manage and minimise community tension (e.g. over issues with illegal parking, traffic, wild camping, anti-social behaviour)

## Strategy

Using a multi-channel communication campaign with a carefully planned media buying strategy, we targeted would-be visitors to Dorset to show them that 'Dorset is a great place to visit' and to encourage the behaviours we wanted to see. We also wanted to show that Dorset Council balances the best interests of its residents, visitors, economy and environment by evidencing consistency in our thinking and decision making.

Behavioural science findings were used to help shape the campaign. Positive reinforcement is more effective at encouraging the behaviour you want to see, rather than negative messaging targeting offenders such as 'Don't be a tosser'. We also knew we needed to be specific about the behaviours we wanted to see, so that formed part of the messaging. We wanted to create common ground between both residents and visitors to reduce community tensions – i.e. we are united in our love for Dorset. This fitted with the desire to promote Dorset as a place to visit, maximising the economic benefits for the county.

## Our key message was 'Promise to Love Dorset'

The activities below were delivered to ensure a high impact and high awareness campaign to target audiences. We used the Council Advertising Network (CAN Digital Solutions) to make sure our campaign targeted specific demographics with geographical interests to reach the right audiences online, out of home and on social media who had showed an interest in visiting Dorset.

- Data analysis shows us where our domestic visitors come from. London and surrounding areas, Bristol and Birmingham are the top three places from where visitors travel, so we targeted these. And we used digital marketing to target people who we knew were planning a holiday in Dorset from monitoring key Google search words e.g. 'holidays in Dorset', 'accommodation in Dorset', 'what to do in Dorset'. Paid for and organic social media across Dorset council's corporate and visitor channels (mainly Facebook and Instagram)
- Targeted e-newsletter campaigns aimed at various audiences including businesses, local people and community groups
- Clear and concise onsite signage / banners at beauty spot car parks and in towns and parishes
- We used 'Out of Home' assets including radio and podcast adverts, ads at petrol stations on trunk roads into Dorset, roadside billboards, physical posters in bus stops and in key location supermarkets.
- Colleagues from operational services around the council and key town councils supported the campaign through their own channels.

- We secured important buy-in from our environmental and landowning partners such as the Lulworth Estate, the National Trust, Natural England and RSPB as well as town and parish councils who shared this campaign on their own channels to amplify the message to their audiences.
- Litter Free Dorset also ran a multimedia campaign alerting people to the risks of lighting camp fires or having BBQs in sensitive areas prone to wildfires, which supported the aims of this campaign and those of Dorset Fire and Rescue Service.

## Implementation

The campaign soft launched in April 2021 with 'Out of Home' ads to coincide with the Easter holidays and was hard launched in full at the end of May bank holiday to catch half term visitors and in time for the main school holidays at the end of July. The campaign was active to the end of September.

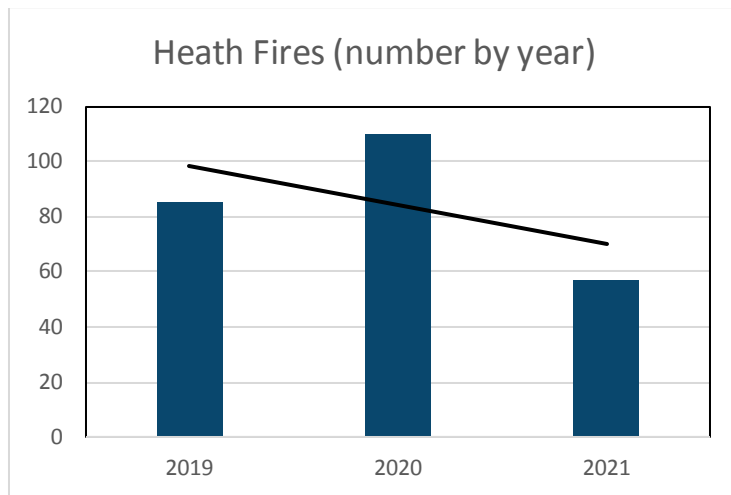
## Results – what did the campaign achieve?

CAN's digital programming achieved the following:

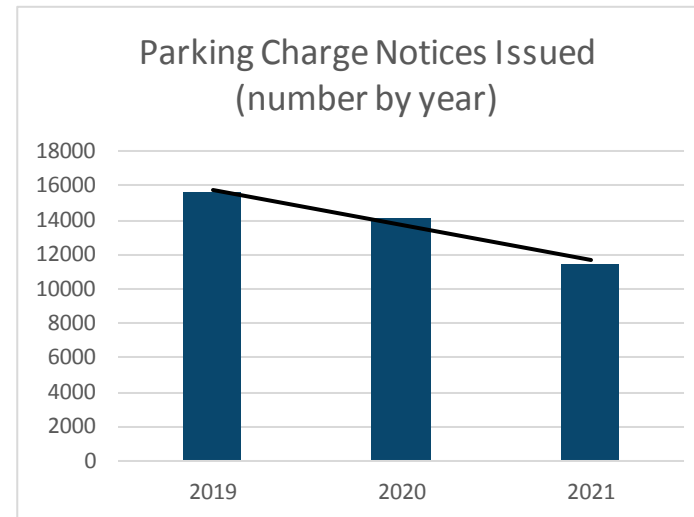
- **Impressions - 18,815,682** (number of digital views or engagements)
- **Interactions - 281,629** (click throughs, swipe ups, likes, shares, video views over 10 seconds)

We measured the effectiveness of our campaign by comparing data from 2019 (pre pandemic), against data from 2020 where we saw a spike in the change in visitor behaviour and 2021, when we ran our campaign. All figures relate to the period 1 May – 31 Aug.

## Heath Fires



## PCNs issued (parking fines)



We needed to close the roads to Lulworth on just one occasion in 2021 due to dangerous volumes of traffic, whereas this same stretch of road was closed at least twice in 2020. New tow-away zones were introduced in Lulworth and Studland in May to deter illegal parking.

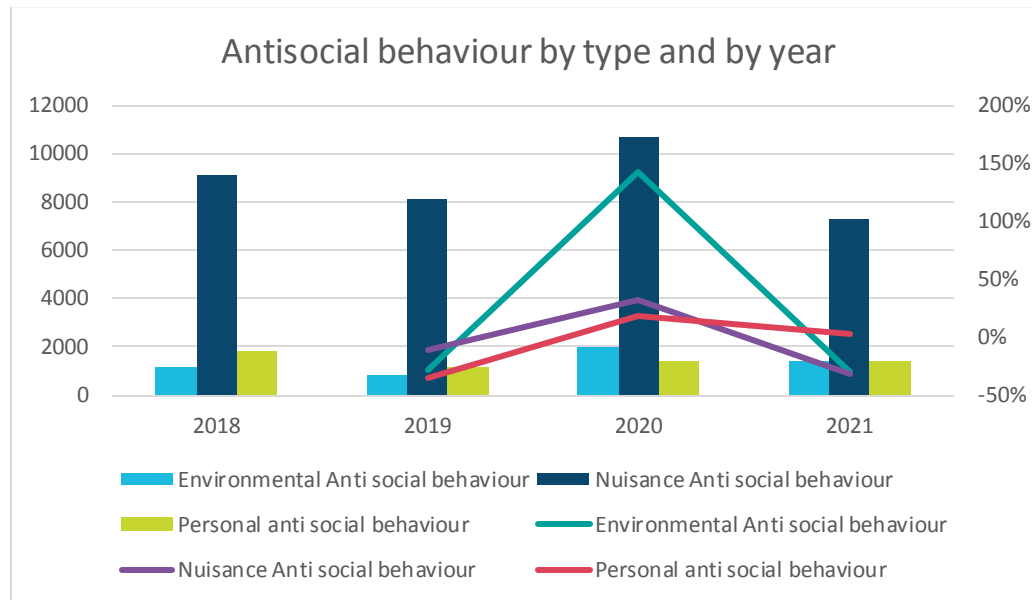
## Litter collected

- In Weymouth and Portland we collected around 1,000 tonnes more general waste. Up +13% on 2020. This indicates that more people were using the additional waste provision across the area.
- Across the whole of the Dorset Council area, general waste is up +4.53% since 2020. This is positive. More general waste in bins = less litter.
- Splitting the data between more rural areas in east and north Dorset and the coastal areas (Purbeck, west and Weymouth and Portland) indicates that rural areas have seen a small reduction in waste (-2.94%) whereas coastal areas took a hit (+9.92%).

## Anti-Social Behaviour

During Summer 2021 Dorset Police saw a decrease in reported incidents of ASB. In 2020 there was a spike in 'nuisance ASB' where COVID related ASB issues are recorded.

Anti-social behaviour by type 1<sup>st</sup> April-31 August year-on-year



### Definitions:

- Personal – ASB that is deliberately targeted at an individual or group that has an impact on that individual or group rather than the community at large.
- Nuisance – ASB that causes annoyance to the local community in general rather than an individual.
- Environmental – ASB that impacts on surroundings including natural, built and social environments.



## What are the key learnings and recommendations for future activity?

Part of the evaluation of this campaign has been undertaken by research partners at Winchester University, made possible with funding successfully secured from National Geographic. Our partners took a different approach to assessing the campaign's effectiveness and undertook survey work at three locations over the summer. An interim summary of their findings is due in January 2022 with the final report due later in the year.

One of the key take-aways from their survey work was that residents and local businesses they spoke to were **pleased that Dorset Council had taken feedback on board** from the previous year. The flip side of this recognition, however, is that the same people believed it to be a one-off effort.

Taking all the factors above into consideration, combined with anecdotal data from social listening activity (fewer comments made to @DorsetCouncilUK accounts), fewer complaints received through the council's customer service team and via staff **all indicates that our campaign has been successful.**

The creation and delivery of the Promise to Love Dorset campaign was only made possible by the funding we were able to access through COMF (Covid Outbreak Management Fund). The campaign creation and associated media buying strategy cost £120k. One of our original aims was to create a legacy campaign from the COVID recovery funding which had a life span of between 2 and 5 years.

While we do not have the resources to run such a comprehensive campaign for 2022 it may be possible to run smaller campaigns in house, based on the five promises, budgets allowing.

Land-owning partners in Dorset have indicated they are keen to work with us on similar visitor campaigns in the future, which has strengthened our already solid partnerships.





**Kirstie Snow**  
**Dorset Council Communications Team**  
**December 2021**