

## Questions from Councillors to Cabinet 28 March 2023

### 1. Question from Cllr P Kimber

#### **Question to Cabinet Regarding the long-suffering issues for the people regarding the mess on Portland roads from the Quarry's.**

I'm receiving complaints via my Councillors surgery regarding the mess on the Portland Roads and which is going onto homes, and cars. This is regarding the stone dust that's messing up the streets and Houses.

"The horrific state of Grove Rd Portland. Where to start? The constant mud dirt, stones from the new quarry off grove field and the pathetic attempts to road sweep as there should be some sort of truck wash as the lorries leave the quarry entrance at the least.

I must wash 3 cars every week as they are caked in mud there is damage to the road where the heavy loaders cross from one side then on to the main road to the quarry on the other side the whole Rd from grove corner to midway up grove Rd is dangerously skiddy when wet due to the mud dust stone etc.

Then come summer just dry dust everywhere in the garden on the washing on the cars let alone what health dangers this will impact our health in the future. I could go on and on, but things need to change urgently as it is like living on a constant building site with no due care for the residents the environment the natural habit and wildlife. Please treat this as a priority community disaster unfolding before anyone nationally pays a big interest. Look forward to your thoughts and response."

Other areas are Easton where the homeowners are also facing this mess.

**From another angry resident.** I live on Portland in your constituency where there is a serious problem with the roads. They are a mess because of detritus caused by quarrying activity, particularly around Easton.

Dorset Council say their powers to limit and regulate quarry activity are limited because of a **1951 planning consent. This cannot be right in 2023!**

I should be grateful if you would ascertain whether this aged planning consent can be amended so that the quarry companies act more responsibly and clear the mess they cause. drive round the island and see for yourself.

Stone quarrying activity obviously needs to be limited so the whole island does not disappear on the backs of lorries! People should come before profit.

#### **Question when will the Dorset Council address this problem.**

### Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

The majority of the quarry sites on Portland were allowed under a 1951 planning permission, which only had two conditions, neither of which could be used to enforce against these matters.

There has been a particular problem during the intensive quarrying of stone for the deep-water berth at Portland Port. The contractor has been working directly with affected residents to resolve their concerns and has been carrying out regular and daily sweeping of the roads, but this has had mixed success depending on the weather conditions.

As these particular quarrying operations have now ceased, the situation should now improve.

## **2. Question from Kelvin Clayton**

A substantial number of Bridport's housing stock are listed buildings. These are often small and relatively cheap houses inhabited by the working population of the town. However, when many owners have applied for permission to install energy efficiency measures like double-glazing, they are often refused on the grounds that such measures will harm the significance of the building. The same reasons have been given to small businesses trying to reduce their energy bills by installing solar pv panels on their roofs.

Although the NPPF defines 'significance' as "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest" this significance, and any harm done to it, is in effect the sole judgement of a conservation officer.

In her book *Playing With The Past*, the former CEO of the Welsh Government's heritage service, Kate Clark, writes: "Traditionally, heritage specialists have used their expertise to define the significance of heritage sites, but increasingly practitioners will need to behave less like dictators and more like facilitators – listening to people, engaging with communities and helping groups explore what matters, rather than telling them."

Would it be possible for the guidance note outlining the importance of the historic heritage and issues to consider when looking at energy efficiency in listed buildings to be modified to include a commitment to a programme of community engagement?

### **Response from Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The aim of the document "Listed buildings – what you can do for climate change" is to take the approach suggested by Kate Clark in that it seeks to facilitate and work with applicants. The document outlines what measures can be taken on listed buildings which do not require listed building consent. Where consent is required, the approach is to look at whether there are other options that could be undertaken to achieve the aims of the applicant and not conflict with national planning policy. One example of this could be to locate solar panels on modern extensions, sheds or garage roofs as an alternative to siting them on the listed building.

With regard to community engagement, a series of planning workshops is planned after Easter to which representatives from all town and parish councils will be invited. A key part of these will be presentations on the climate change interim guidance and position statement, sustainability checklist and listed building guidance. Town and

parish council representatives will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the content of the documents. Community engagement forms part of the implementation of the planning commitment to climate change, so it is not proposed to include specific reference to it in the document.