

Full Council – 16 April 2026

Questions submitted by the Public

Question 1 – submitted by Geoffrey Chopping

In January 2018, before the East Dorset District Council Offices closed, I submitted a Definitive Map Modification Order Application for a public footpath across Woodleaze Copse and through the offices site to Furzehill Wood. Many witnesses supported the application, several of which are dogwalkers and still use the application route daily. Furzehill Wood is owned by the Woodland Trust and is open to the public.

Since then, I have become a Holt Parish Councillor and Biodiversity Net Gain has become a requirement. Consequently, I am keen to support: the current users of the Application footpath; the interests of the future residents of the new estate; and to protect the considerable wildlife which uses the site as a wide wildlife corridor linking the green spaces, which almost totally surround the development site. Although there is some fencing it is mainly fairly porous fencing so that most Wildlife can find a way through, including large mammals.

Over a year ago, when I learnt that the DMMO Application was being claimed by Dorset Council as the reason the current preferred developer had not agreed to formally proceed, I explained that Dorset Council could legally declare the current walkable DMMO application route as a Public Footpath (precisely fulfilling the Application Route), or if they would create a walkable route and declare it along or near the boundaries of the 5 adjacent dwellings and declare it as a public footpath then I would be delighted to withdraw my DMMO Application.

Dorset Council have done neither, even though the Senior Ranger - Green space team East confirmed that the route along the fences was possible.

In the last year, the quantity of vandalization has increased enormously and the police have been repeatedly called.

So far Dorset Council have failed to implement any effective security measures and the vandalization continues unchecked. A manhole cover was missing for a month leaving a deep water filled chamber as a considerable safety hazard.

The Leader of Dorset Council was invited to issue a statement to the Holt Annual Parish meeting, held on 19 March 2026, with an update of the situation including: the DMMO footpath Application.

the position with the preferred developer, who is the Whitelock Group;

when effective security would be undertaken,

and whether Dorset Council has accepted yet that Furzehill is really not suitable for having an enormous quantity of further dwellings dumped in its midst, when there is a complete lack of sustainable public transport and limited local shopping facilities.

No statement was received then, nor has one be received since.

QUESTION: Will Dorset Council explain why it neither attempted to answer any of the questions, nor comment on any of the criticisms?

Question 2 – submitted by Jenny Murray

On the 16h April 2026 it will be exactly one year since the UK Supreme Court ruled unanimously in the For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers that the terms “sex” “man” and “woman” in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biological sex. (a link to the ruling is here <https://supremecourt.uk/cases/press-summary/uksc-2024-0042>).

The Government has confirmed that organisations should not wait for "EHRC guidance" as the FWS Supreme Court ruling was "crystal clear". The EHRC said the guidance "is just a navigation tool" and the law of the land was determined on 16 April 2025.

We are aware that Dorset Council has established a "A Task and Finish Working Group" for action across this area. Can Dorset Council confirm it is now compliant with the FWS Supreme Court Ruling across all its internal and external policies, internal/external training, data collection, equality impact assessments and is also ensuring that all 3rd party service providers/supply base are compliant.