



Down to Earth

A newsletter
for rural
communities

No. 1

July 2019



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

The Rural Officer for Dorset writes...

Welcome to the first edition of *Down to Earth*. I know that the churches in my own area in West Dorset have read and loved some of the articles in it. So, to them, my apologies, as this now goes 'viral' across Dorset! *Down to Earth* will be published bi-monthly and will bring you items of interest in the rural or farming world. There may be some articles, of course, that do not relate solely to Dorset but have more of a generic coverage.

In any event, please enjoy and, if you wish to challenge me on anything or perhaps send me an article that relates to your own village, church or Deanery, please do so. This newsletter has been sent out by email, but if you know anyone who cannot receive it, then please print it out for them. Equally, if you want to copy and place on church noticeboards, please feel free to do so.

My contact details are below, so please be in touch. Many thanks to all who contributed, especially the Rural Services Network.

The Reverend Richard Kirlew
Rural Officer for Dorset

email: rural.chaplaincy@btinternet.com

tel: 01963 23570

mobile: 07966 754110

The Post-Brexit World in Rural England?

Millions of people living in rural England are at risk of being "left behind" and missing out on their fair share of future prosperity following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, council leaders warn. The Local Government Association (LGA) set up a Post-Brexit England Commission to examine the challenges and opportunities faced by non-metropolitan England. Its final report, published at the LGA's Annual Conference in Bournemouth on 4 July, argues that these challenges can only be met by delegating greater powers to local areas.



They list the crucial issues faced as a disproportionately ageing population; rural businesses being disadvantaged by Government's fast-tracking of economic growth in cities; and poor mobile and broadband connectivity. West Dorset has 54 retired residents per 100 of working age, forecast to rise to 88 per 100 by 2041. Younger people struggle to find jobs and homes locally and move away. Businesses are on average 30% less productive in rural areas, and only 42% of rural residents receive a 4G signal from every major mobile network operator.

Without their fair share of investment, councils are concerned that the 'brain drain' towards urban areas will continue. The LGA is calling for the Government to use the Spending Review to address the £8bn overall funding gap facing councils by 2025.

Full article: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/28550>

The Road Back to Nature

A long-running campaign encouraging councils to let neatly-mown grass verges become mini-meadows where wildflowers and wildlife can flourish appears to be building up a head of steam.

Since 2013, Plantlife has been telling authorities that this move could help them save money and boost their green credentials, and several have taken the message on board. An 8-mile 'river of flowers' along a major route in Rotherham was widely praised on social media recently, and the council there have saved an estimated £23,000 a year on mowing costs. Roadside meadows have also popped up in many counties in the North and Midlands.

So what about the more urban parts of Dorset?

Full article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-48772448>



Elusive GPs amidst NHS Crisis



Most patients who want to see their own GP can no longer get an appointment with them, according to new figures suggesting the days of the family doctor are over. The statistics show record numbers of patients struggling even to get through on the telephone, and increasingly long waits for appointments.

For the first time, the majority of patients who wanted to see a particular doctor were unable to do so, a survey of more than 770,000 patients shows. More than half of those polled had a preferred GP. Of those, just 48% said they saw or spoke to their preferred GP "always or almost always", a fall from 50.2% in 2018, and a steep drop from 65% in 2012, although researchers said changes in the way the survey was carried out meant the figures were not directly comparable.

Figures also show that the proportion of patients finding it difficult to get through to make a GP appointment has risen by 65% since 2012, and rising numbers are turning to A & E when their GP practices are closed.

The research comes amid mounting evidence of a wider NHS crisis, with waiting lists reaching an all-time high. Medics say the "worrying" situation is being fuelled by a dispute over pensions, with senior doctors increasingly refusing to work overtime, or opting for early retirement, to avoid high tax rates.

Full article: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/07/11/record-numbers-struggle-see-gp-cant-see-one-want/>

And finally... (with grateful thanks to Allan Spedding)

Any good with the new text speak gobbledegook?

A mum texts: "Hi! Son, what do IDK, LY, & TTYL mean?"

He texts back: "I Don't Know, Love You, & Talk To You Later."

She texts: "It's OK, son, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister. Love you too."

