

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MULLINS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

- **Licensing**

At a recent council meeting concern was raised that the new licensing bill included a proposal that churches would be charged for a Public Entertainment Licence (PEL), following these concerns letters were sent from the council to Adrian Flook MP and Tessa Jowell MP (Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport) expressing TDBC's concerns.

The Government has now announced that secular entertainment in places of worship shall be allowed without a licence once the new Licensing Bill comes into force.

Tessa Jowell has announced that the Government has tabled an amendment to include secular as well as religious music within the Bill's exemptions. This reflects the current position outside of London, and will generally deregulatory measures of the proposed legislation.

The Government has also signalled its intention to exempt church halls, chapels, halls, other places of public worship, village halls, community halls, and other similar buildings from the fees regime under the new laws, due to come into force in 2004.

- **Waste Services**

In addition to the introduction of the kerbside collection of dry recyclables to 38500 properties before the end of March there are further developments in waste and recycling.

The SWP has been successful in bidding for £363, 000 from the second round of the DEFRA Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund to provide a service for blocks of flats in Taunton Deane, Mendip Sedgemoor and South Somerset. The proposal includes the purchase of two specialist vehicles together with the purchase of various types of containers that will enable fortnightly collections of recyclables from 75 "micro recycling sites" in each district. The funds for this service will be available from April 2003.

The subsidised provision of home composting equipment will be available from Monkton Elm Garden centre or delivered direct to households. This initiative will commence in early March! (containers available from just £5!!)

The organic (garden waste collection service commences again at the beginning of March and this year has been extended into Stoke St. Gregory, North Curry, Hatch Beauchamp, Stoke St. Mary, West Monkton, West Buckland and Bradford on Tone.

- **Food Safety, Health and Safety**

The food safety team is on target to complete its inspection programme by 31st March.

We recently had a successful prosecution of Northcott Catering, (Blackbrook Lay-by). Fined £3000 for on Hygiene issues.

Seminars on the new asbestos regulations and on accident investigation have been well received by the businesses attending

There is to be a H&S seminar for the hair and beauty trades on 17th February, in conjunction with SCAT.

- **Environmental Protection**

Air Quality Management Areas

The Orders declaring the Air Quality Management Areas in East Reach and Henlade have now come into effect.

A draft Project Plan has been produced combining the many deadlines that will lead to the publication of the Action Plan by June 2004. The Action Plan requires a significant commitment from stakeholders outside the Council and will involve wide public and specialist consultation.

Blagdon Hill Sewerage Scheme

Work by Wessex Water to provide first time mains sewerage to parts of Blagdon Hill and Pitminster has now been completed.

The Environmental Protection Team is continuing to identify properties that are causing pollution and whose owners have not yet connected to the new scheme. Attempts will be made to persuade remaining owners and, if this approach fails, enforcement action will need to be contemplated.

Housing Standards

Officers attended a Briefing by Clearsprings and follow up meetings with their management will be held at the end of this month to begin the process of joint working.

- **Flooding and Drainage**

TDDB continues to take an active part in the Parrett Catchment Project. At the well attended 3rd Annual Forum, Andrew Wilcox gave a brief resume of the work associated with sustainable drainage issues. Having secured funding from the European Union and with the full backing of Elliot Morley MP the Project is

progressing on resolving the many problem drainage issues encountered within the catchment. It is encouraging to know that the format adopted by the PCP is being proposed to be adopted throughout England and Wales.

In depth (*no pun intended*), investigations are continuing at Creech St Michael, Bathpool and Lloyd Close Taunton.

Much work has been involved in liaising with local communities and their flood liaison groups, in setting up sandbag stores and in the promotion of the local Flood Wardens.

Councillor Melvyn Mullins

