

Dinah's Hollow Project Update for Parish Councils - February 2026

Cllr Jane Somper – Beacon Ward

Progress on Site

The first phase of tree clearance has now been completed. This work was undertaken under specific environmental licences due to the presence of protected species, including bats and dormice. These licences form a formal agreement between Dorset Council and Natural England. Any residents wishing to see details of the licence arrangements should contact Natural England directly

Drainage operations are continuing and remain a significant element of the scheme. While some activities have been rescheduled due to recent weather conditions, the overall programme remains on target.

The main construction phase is due to commence in April. This will include further vegetation clearance and soil nailing works. As a result, there will be a noticeable increase in activity on site, with works taking place on both sides of the hollow within a restricted working area

Temporary Traffic Arrangements – C13 / Melbury Abbas

Concerns have been raised regarding higher traffic volumes and issues with compliance on White Pit Lane, Quarry Lane and West Lane. Some redistribution of traffic is anticipated while the closure remains in place; however, reports of drivers ignoring one-way systems and travelling at inappropriate speeds are concerning

The temporary measures introduced around Melbury Abbas were intended to support local residents and are not essential for the stabilisation works themselves. These arrangements are currently under review to determine whether they remain appropriate and effective

Highways officers have inspected reported potholes on the affected lanes. Repairs have been scheduled in accordance with Dorset Council's maintenance policies. Parish councils are encouraged to remind residents to continue reporting highway defects via the council's online portal

A350 – Speed Limits, Signage and Road Condition

From Monday 9 March, an additional temporary 20mph speed restriction will be introduced on selected side roads. This will allow some signage near junctions to be repositioned to improve visibility.

- For its entire length Oakwood Drive, Irwerne Minster
- For its entire length The Paddocks, Irwerne Minster
- Higher Street, Irwerne Minster, From its junction with Blandford Road (A350) in an easterly direction for a distance of 53 metres

- The Knapp from its junction with A350 to its junction with Crown Hill and Crown Hill, from its junction with A350 to its junction with The Knapp, Fontmell Magna
- Mill Street, from its junction with A350 in an easterly direction for a distance of approximately 21m east from its junction with Collyer's rise, Fontmell Magna
- For its entire length Collyer's rise, Fontmell Magna
- For its entire length Parsonage Street, Fontmell Magna
- For its entire length St Andrew's View, Fontmell Magna

There have also been concerns about verge damage along Mill Street. The highways team is currently reviewing potential remedial works

The impact of increased traffic on surrounding roads has been factored into the project budget. Once the Dinah's Hollow scheme is complete, road conditions in the surrounding area will be reassessed and any necessary permanent repairs will be undertaken