

# Parrett & Axe Parish Council

## The Villages of Chedington and South Perrott

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Dear Ms White

### **Mobile Phone Reception in South Perrott, Dorset**

I am writing to you as Chairman of the Parrett & Axe Parish Council to ask for your help in persuading the mobile phone operators of the need for an improvement to mobile reception in South Perrott, Dorset.

The village of South Perrott consists of 100 properties and is located on the A356 between Crewkerne and Dorchester. It lies in a dip in the hills and is overshadowed by a high escarpment; as a result it has little or no mobile phone reception.

The Council is aware that the Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) is coming to an end. Until recently we were led to believe by the team at Dorset County Council, who were co-ordinating the MIP in Dorset, that our village had been identified as a "not-spot" and was being considered for a mobile phone mast. However, one of the four mobile phone providers, EE, claimed (and continues to claim) that their signal is available in the village, and so no further action was taken to find a suitable site for a mast.

EE is incorrect in claiming that their signal is available in the village (other providers accept that they cannot provide a service). We have commissioned an in-depth survey of all households in the village and it is clear from the responses that properties in the centre of the village (represented by postcodes DT8 3HA, DT8 3HZ and DT8 3PQ) have no mobile reception at all, whilst those on the edge and slightly higher up the surrounding hills receive at best a patchy reception. A report on the survey is attached to this letter.

Mobile phones have become a vital means of communication and this has recently been brought home to us by the following examples:-

- Last year a villager who was in the final stages of her pregnancy needed to call her midwives when she went into labour, but the phone cut out on her several times. This was deeply concerning and also potentially dangerous. Her provider is EE, who have subsequently accepted the lack of signal and reduced her monthly charge by 25%.

- Two years ago, a storm brought down the main overhead telephone line serving the whole of South Perrott. It was four days before the line was repaired and during that time the village was cut off with no landline and no mobile signal, leaving residents, especially the elderly, feeling vulnerable.
- During the St Valentine's Day storm last year, a falling tree brought down power cables supplying about 30 properties on the north side of the village. Modern cordless phones require electricity to function, so the landlines were out of action.
- In May this year, a woman slipped outside the pub and sustained a suspected broken leg. The pedestrian who came to her aid could not use his mobile phone and had to run to the nearest landline in order to phone for an ambulance.

We have read David Hirst's Briefing Paper (07069, 9 June 2015) *Mobile Coverage in the UK: Government plans to tackle 'mobile not spots'*, and note the intention to create a "legally binding agreement by mobile operators: to investment (*sic*) a guarantee £5bn to improve mobile infrastructure by 2017; and to guarantee voice and text coverage from each operator across 90% of the UK geographic area by 2017." (p.3) and to "make the deal legally binding by accepting amended licence conditions to reflect the agreement (which) will be enforceable by Ofcom." (p.11). We therefore request, in the implementation of this policy directive and the granting of licences, that the needs of South Perrott are considered a high priority.

We look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katherine Organ  
Chairman  
Parrett & Axe Parish Council

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cc Mr Oliver Letwin MP