

**EXMOOR PANEL  
MINUTES  
Tuesday 3 September 2013  
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

**Those present:**

|                                                                        |                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| S Pugsley (Chair)                                                      |                                 |
| J Stringer, Brompton Regis PC                                          | C Knight, Brushford PC          |
| M Martyn, Brushford PC                                                 | R Coyne, Dulverton TC           |
| M Rawle, Dulverton TC                                                  | G Lewis, Dulverton TC           |
| N Thwaites, Dulverton TC                                               | D Lloyd, Exford PC              |
| M Ellicott, Exford PC                                                  | A Vigars, Exmoor PC             |
| F Rawle, Exton PC                                                      | M Timbrell, Porlock PC          |
| M Washington-Smith, Huish Champflower PC                               | D Walker, Skilgate Parish       |
| J Bray, Winsford PC                                                    | S Hayes, Winsford PC            |
| T Staples, Winsford PC                                                 | K Lindop, Winsford PC           |
| P Griffin, Wootton Courtenay PC                                        | F Nicholson, SCC                |
| D Peake and K Harwood, SCC Highways                                    | T Saunders, ENPA                |
| T Murray, Magna Housing Association                                    | C Savage, Rural Housing Project |
| J Edwards                                                              | P James, Taunton Deane BC       |
| K J Ross, WSC                                                          | B Lang, WSC                     |
| PC A Ware, APS T Lomas and PCSO D Rowe, Avon and Somerset Constabulary |                                 |

**1 Apologies for Absence**

1.1 F Gabb and R Manicom, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

**2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2013 and Matters Arising**

2.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

2.2 Bruce Lang reported that Simon Edwards, Commissioning Manager of the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group had agreed to attend the January 2014 meeting of the Panel to provide an update on ambulance service issues in the Panel area.

**3 Magna West Somerset Housing Association**

3.1 Tony Murray, the Director of Magna West Somerset Housing Association, presented an annual report to the Panel – a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda – reiterating the role of the housing association and his activities over the previous twelve months.

3.2 He made one amendment to the written report to the extent that under their housing stock for the area covered by the Exmoor Panel area there were three properties in Luxborough and three in Skilgate that should be added which brought the total of homes in the Panel area up to 370.

3.3 There was then an in-depth discussion on Magna's recent decision to sell a property in Dulverton and a property in Withypool.

- 3.4 In response to questions, Tony Murray explained the background to these decisions and confirmed that as a learning point Magna would speak to parish and town councils and local ward councillors in regard to any future disposals at an early stage, set out the reasons behind any proposal to dispose of a property and to take account of any feedback received.
- 3.5 Tony Murray offered to go and talk to any parish/town council regarding housing related matters. Colin Savage of the Rural Housing Project also attended the meeting and explained that a piece of work was being undertaken to identify real housing needs on Exmoor and what can be done in partnership with town and parish councils and the local communities to meet that need.
- 3.6 In this respect, both Tony and Colin encouraged anyone to forward any thoughts to them. Their email contacts are as follows: [tony.murray@magna.org.uk](mailto:tony.murray@magna.org.uk) and [cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)
- 3.7 In response to a point made by the Chairman of the Panel, Tony Murray confirmed that Magna would back any representations being made to encourage the Housing and Communities Agency to relax its rules in regard to the requirements to sell units of affordable housing in sparsely populated rural areas.
- 3.8 The Chairman thanked Tony and Colin for their presentation and time taken in answering questions.

#### **4 Police Issues**

- 4.1 PCSO D Rowe outlined crime figures in the Exmoor Panel area since the last meeting:
- Timberscombe – 1 potential theft
  - Wootton Courtenay – nothing to report
  - Cutcombe – 3 thefts
  - Porlock – 4 thefts, 1 theft from a motor vehicle, 1 treat, 1 drugs possession and 1 wasting police time
  - Exton, Brompton Regis, Dulverton, Withypool and Hawkridge and Exford – 1 possession of drugs, 3 violence, 2 criminal damage, 2 assault, 2 making off without payment, 1 arson, 4 thefts, 1 dog animal worrying
- 4.2 Concern was expressed by Panel members at the level of crime in this part of the Panel area.
- 4.3 The Police had held a successful youth event in the summer holidays at Dulverton Sports Field and in excess of 60 youngsters attended and appeared to enjoy themselves.
- 4.4 It was pointed out that some areas of the Panel had not been covered in the crime figures update and PCSO Rowe agreed to take this back.
- 4.5 Reference was made to Ringmaster service whereby anyone could phone 101 and request to be placed on the system to receive police/crime related information. A point of concern was raised regarding the feeding of game near the highway on either side of Winsford and PCSO Rowe agreed to take this back to the police's wildlife officer, Andy Whysall.

- 4.6 There was a short presentation from Tom Lomas who was acting as the police force liaison officer in regard to the badger cull that was currently being undertaken in West Somerset. Tom's contact details are:  
Email [tom.lomas@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:tom.lomas@avonandsomerset.police.uk) Mobile 07900 703909

## **5 Somerset County Council Highways Issues**

- 5.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake were present for this item.
- 5.2 Karin Harwood listed a series of proposed road closures for Dulverton and Dulverton Town Council representatives invited Karin to attend a meeting of the Town Council that was scheduled to be held on Monday 9 September 2013 so that this matter could be considered in more detail.
- 5.3 Karin then explained the current legal position in regard to the provision of signage relating to road closures and diversions and explained that there was little opportunity for the County Council to be flexible as it was incumbent upon the authority to abide by the current rules and regulations stipulated by the Department for Transport.
- 5.4 The guidance relating to Traffic Signs:  
With immediate effect, the Department will stop authorising any sign that falls within a category marked "NO" in the prescribed table. This arrangement will remain in place until the new Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) come into force (possibly around March 2015). The new regulations will allow much greater flexibility regarding the variation and placing of traffic signs. Until such time, when your authority wishes to use a sign that falls within a category marked "NO", you will be expected to use signs prescribed in TSRGD and those authorised nationally since 2011. Copies of national authorisations issued since 1 January 2011 can be viewed on our traffic signs authorisations website at:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-auths> [use the search facility to search for your authority's name]. As of 17 June 2013, the Department will only consider traffic sign authorisation applications for signs that fall within the categories marked "YES" in the prescribed table. To clarify, as per normal, local authorities are expected to use prescribed traffic signs (i.e. those that appear in the TSRGD 2002 as amended) or traffic signs that have been authorised by the Secretary of State. If you request authorisation for a variant of a traffic sign in a category marked "NO", we will not consider this application. We recommend that you seek alternative signing solutions that involve using traffic signs prescribed in TSRGD or that have been authorised nationally. Traffic signs in a category marked "NO" in the prescribed table will remain available for use in their prescribed forms in TSRGD. Only the Secretary of State and his delegated officials have powers to authorise traffic signs. Local authorities do not have these powers. It is unlawful to place traffic signs that are not prescribed in TSRGD or are otherwise authorised by the Secretary of State and his delegated officials. Please note: a reference to "traffic signs" above means traffic signs, traffic signals and road markings.
- 5.5 The winter season for 2012/2013 was a long drawn out affair with temperatures only picking up and returning to normal in late April.
- 5.6 For the season (October to April) there were 96 full treatments of the Somerset Precautionary Salting Network (compared to 44 in 2011/2012 and 114 in

2010/2011). In addition there were 13 patrols with spot treatment of wet patches, mainly during the long cold, dry spell towards the end of the winter.

5.7 There were four snow events during the winter; those on 4 November and 10/11 March were quite localised whilst those on 17/18 January and 22/23 January covered the whole county, with the latter being particularly severe in places.

5.8 Total salt usage was around 8,200 tonnes. The end of season stock figure was 1,500 tonnes and replenishment is currently underway to return to full stock level of 7,000 tonnes, plus an additional winter resilience reserve of 2,000 tonnes at Milverton Landing.

5.9 Mrs Peake's prediction from the West Pennine Moors of Lancashire for the winter of 2013/2014 is "snowy"!

## **6 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Issues**

6.1 The representatives of the Fire Service had sent their apologies for the meeting.

6.2 Councillor Keith Ross mentioned that he was aware that the issue of the first respondent service which was to be provided from the Dulverton station was still under discussion.

## **7 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues**

7.1 Tessa Saunders of the Exmoor National Park Authority confirmed that the draft Local Plan was going to be available for consultation for six weeks from November and that several consultative meetings would be held around the Panel area. All parish and town councils would be provided with an electronic copy of the consultation document.

## **8 Parish Lengthsman Scheme and Update**

8.1 Dulverton Town Council representatives made a plea to all parish councils involved in the scheme to provide information of the work that had been carried out by the lengthsman so that quality monitoring information could be provided to the funders of the scheme.

8.2 The Town Council was now in the planning phase in regard to continuing the scheme for 2014/15 and the question of available funding was raised. In regard to West Somerset Council's position, Bruce Lang confirmed that as far as he was aware there were currently no plans to cut the current level of funding for 2014/15 and therefore, at this stage, the project could plan on the basis that £3,000 would be available from the Council for the next financial year, subject to final budget setting in February, 2014..

## **9 Items to be brought forward by Parishes**

9.1 Representatives from Dulverton Town Council reported that South West Water would be using a considerable amount of stone/hard core material as part of a project in the town which would then be available for disposal and anyone interested in making use of such material after the project had been completed should contact South West Water direct.

## **10 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings**

- 7 November 2013 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 23 January 2014 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 6 March 2014 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm