

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Tuesday 3 November 2015
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)	C Knight, Brushford PC Clerk
V White, Cutcombe PC	J Anson, Cutcombe PC
M Rawle, Dulverton TC	K Tucker, Exford PC
J Hickman, Exford PC	M Ellicott, Exford PC
D Powell, Luxborough PC	J Parsons, Timberscombe PC
J Bray, Winsford PC	B Flanagan, Winsford PC
M Mileham, Winsford PC	T Howard, Withypool & Hawkridge PC
Chief Inspector S Williams, Avon & Somerset Constabulary	
F Gabb, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	F Nicholson, SCC
D Peake & K Harwood, SCC Highways	N Thwaites, WSC
B Heywood, WSC	B Lang, WSC

1 Have Your Say

1.1 No issues were raised under this item.

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1 R Manicom (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service), West Somerset Councillor K Mills, A Vigars (Exmoor PC), M Willis (Dulverton TC), A Sparling (Luxborough PC) and T Saunders (ENPA).

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2015 and Matters Arising

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

3.2 Matters arising:

(a) paragraph 8.1 - the Chairman advised the Panel that given the severe financial pressures being experienced by West Somerset Council, it may not be possible for the usual annual contribution towards the Parish Lengthsman Scheme to be included in the approved estimates for 2015/16.

(b) paragraph 12 - County Councillor F Nicholson confirmed that a well attended meeting was held on 11 September 2015 regarding the historic signposts project and that several parishes had agreed to undertake a survey of their parishes and that a further meeting in respect of the project was due to be held on 5 November 2015.

4 Police Issues

4.1 Chief Inspector Sean Williams attended and advised the Panel of recent crime figures in the local area.

- 4.2 He confirmed that the recent badger cull had now finished and that the police had put a lot of effort into finding a balance between ensuring the right for peaceful protest whilst allowing the contractors to do their work and minimising disruption to the local community. Compared to the previous badger cull there had been less incidences of crime being committed.
- 4.3 He reported that there had been approximately 100 police calls for September and October in the Exmoor Panel area; these being a mixture of both 999 and 101 calls.
- 4.4 In response to a question as to the future of the police station at Dulverton, Chief Inspector Williams confirmed that at present there were no plans to close the station although, looking forward, it was likely that discussions would be held with other partners such as the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service in regards to co-locating premises. In response to a further question as to whether there was a specialist poaching team, the Chief Inspector confirmed that whilst there was no such specialist team in place, a local officer was currently being trained as a specialist in this field and would be subsequently based in the area which would be of benefit to the local community.
- 4.5 A further question was asked as to whether the removal of the “ring master” message was a sign that the service was being withdrawn. The Chief Inspector clarified that this was not the case as it had been replaced by a new service called “community alert” which hopefully would provide even more information than before.
- 4.6 A member of the Panel made the comment that the 101 number service was still not particularly customer friendly. The Chief Inspector acknowledged that this was still an ongoing problem which was trying to be addressed. Part of the issue was that the number was being overwhelmed with calls and so the Chief Inspector suggested that people try to use the police website to obtain information as an alternative and if they were reporting something that was current or in any way a possible emergency then to not hesitate to use the 999 number.
- 4.7 The Chief Inspector confirmed that the Exmoor Beat team continued to retain the same number of police constables and there were no plans to reduce it as far as he was aware.
- 4.8 In response to a question regarding the CCTV bid being made in respect of Cutcombe, the Chief Inspector confirmed that he was working closely with the clerk of Cutcombe Parish Council with a view to resubmitting a bid to the community action fund in the name of the parish council by a deadline of 1 December 2015.
- 4.9 The Panel reaffirmed its support for this bid to be successful as it would be a great benefit to not only Cutcombe but the whole of the Exmoor Panel area.
- 4.10 The Chairman thanked the Chief Inspector for his attendance and looked forward to his continued support in the future.

5 SCC Highways

- 5.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake from Somerset County Council attended for this item and went through the planned works for the Exmoor Panel area as set out in the appendix to the minutes of this meeting.
- 5.2 Specific reference was made to the extra works recently undertaken in Dunster between the traffic lights which had to be redone at least twice and caused some inconvenience for which the Highway Authority apologised.
- 5.3 Dulverton Town Council representatives made reference to the Wessex Water road closure at Dulverton and the County Council Highway representatives confirmed that they were going to meet with Wessex Water to try and minimise any disruption that may result.
- 5.4 In regard to road closures, Karin Harwood confirmed that every effort was going to be made to ensure that there would be no planned road closures on the key gritting network during the winter period.
- 5.5 David Peake made reference to the various pieces of work being undertaken in the district in relation to the Connecting Devon and Somerset Superfast Broadband project. If anyone was interesting in obtaining more information in regard to the project then briefing sessions were being held as follows:
 - 16 November 2015 – Dunster Tithe Barn
 - 25 November 2015 – Dulverton Middle School
 - 26 November 2015 – Porlock
 - 30 November 2015 – Parracombe
 - 10 December 2015 – Lynton Town Hall
- 5.6 All parish clerks had been advised of the arrangements for collecting salt bags which were to be made available on Saturday 21 November 2015 between 9am and 1pm at the Minehead Highways Depot.
- 5.7 Comments were made regarding salt bags that were being left on the moor being disturbed by animals and Karin Harwood asked that if any such incident was noticed could they please be reported to the Highways Authority as soon as possible so that action could be taken to refill the bags.
- 5.8 It was acknowledged that there was an ongoing issue regarding the surface dressing at Jury Road, Dulverton.
- 5.9 It was agreed that West Somerset Council would be approached to see whether Mill Lane in Exford could receive the benefit of street cleaning from the Council's contractors.
- 5.10 An issue was raised regarding a problem with drainage at Muddicombe Lane at Exford and the County Council confirmed that they were awaiting to see if there was sufficient budget; in some instances responsibility could lie with the landowner rather than the Highway Authority.
- 5.11 Confirmation was given that "give way" markings at Exford would be included in the list of works to be replaced.

- 5.12 In response to a question, Karin Harwood undertook to visit Withypool to look at problems regarding drains at Newland Lane.
- 5.13 The Chairman thanked the Highways Authority representatives for their continued efforts and support.

6. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Issues

- 6.1 Frank Gabb reported that there had been a very low level of activity since the last Panel meeting in regard to the Dulverton and Porlock fire station areas.
- 6.2 He did make reference to a new law that had been introduced with effect from 1 October 2015 requiring private landlords to, in certain circumstances, install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- 6.3 The fire service was working in partnership with the government to distribute free fire alarms for eligible landlords to install and if anybody was interested these would be available to be collected at the following times:
Porlock Fire Station – 5 pm to 7 pm on Tuesday evenings
Dulverton Fire Station – 5 pm to 7 pm on Tuesday evenings
Minehead Fire Station – 7 pm to 9 pm on Thursday evenings
- 6.4 In response to a question, it was confirmed that the quick response unit that had been introduced at Porlock were proving a success, enabling the station to keep a service available over periods which had not been possible to do so before. It was possible that this system could be extended to Dulverton at some stage.
- 6.5 In response to a further question regarding whether there was still monies available for communities to purchase a defibrillator, Frank Gabb undertook to look into this and to report back to the Panel in due course.

7. Exmoor National Park Authority Issues

- 7.1 In the absence of Tessa Saunders, the Chairman confirmed that it was hoped that the Exmoor National Park Local Plan would be ready to submit to the Inspector in March 2016.
- 7.2 He also confirmed that the mobile mast application at Haddon Hill had been approved at the Planning Committee meeting held earlier that day.

8. Parish Lengthsman Scheme Update

- 8.1 Councillor M Rawle confirmed that letters had been sent out to all parish clerks on 3 September 2015 asking for parishes to let Dulverton Town Council know if they were still interested in being involved in the scheme for 2016/17 financial year. To date, only 4 parishes had replied and so it was requested that other parishes responded to the Dulverton Town Council clerk as soon as possible and, in any event, before 31 December 2015.

9. Listening and Learning from Parish Councils

- 9.1 Councillor Frances Nicholson made reference to a consultation process the County Council was running to assist the authority in agreeing its priorities to help set a balanced budget for the 2016/17 financial year. Whilst the consultation process was open to all members of the public, parish and town councils were being targeted specifically and all parish clerks should have been sent a link to enable them to complete the consultation form.
- 9.2 She urged all parish councils to participate and the link to the consultation document is set out below:
<https://someset.typeform.com/to/yxTGKf>

10. Consultation on Local Bus Routes

- 10.1 County Councillor Frances Nicholson reported that as part of the budget review the County Council were having to review its subsidised bus routes. A consultation process in this regard was commencing on 9 November 2015.
- 10.2 There were two particular proposals that she wished to draw the Panel's attention to as follows:
(a) to retain a connection between Dulverton and Taunton for weekdays by providing a route to Wiveliscombe where passengers would have a short wait to catch a connection to Taunton and vice versa; it did not look possible to provide any service on a Saturday; and
(b) Minehead to Dulverton – there was a proposal for ATWEST to provide a service that would run to Brushford with a 16 seater bus.
- 10.3 County Councillor Nicholson felt that in all the circumstances these two proposals did warrant some support as it did provide an innovative way of retaining at least some services on these local routes.

11. Items brought forward by Parishes

- 11.1 Dulverton Town Council made reference to the somewhat unsatisfactory arrangements being made by the NatWest Bank in terms of a temporary mobile bank visiting Dulverton on Tuesday between 12 noon and 12.45 pm. The service did not appear to be advertised and customers were complaining that if they were in a queue when 12.45 pm arrived the mobile bank would just move on to the next stop.
- 11.2 The Town Council agreed to provide contact details so that the Panel could make representations to the Bank directly to see whether they would be prepared to improve this service.

12. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 19 January 2016 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 3 March 2016 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm