

Williton, Watchet & Quantocks Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 3 December 2013

at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton, at 7.00 pm

Present

E May (WSC); D Talling and P Grandfield (Holford PC); P Gill (Kilve PC); G Day (Sampford Brett PC); V Boxall (Stogursey PC); L Whetlor (Watchet TC); J Sansom (West Quantoxhead PC); J Koch and G Bigwood (Williton PC); Sgt 1009 Manu (Avon and Somerset Police); G Austin-Thompson (DSFRS); D Westcott (WSC); P Murphy (WSC); A Knight (WSC); H J W Davies (WSC and SCC); A Dyer (WSC); J Foster (Watchet Town Warden)

1. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

- It was highlighted that the regular police incident reports were no longer published in the West Somerset Free Press and whether this was due to cuts. Sgt Manu agreed to contact the police press office about the matter.
- Flooding – a point of concern was raised about the issue of sandbags disappearing from residents' properties.
- The Panel enquired as to whether the police and highways could meet to discuss any lessons learnt from the recent road closure on the A39 at Bilbrook. Sgt Manu agreed to investigate the possibility of this being arranged.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from D Peake (SCC Highways); J Richards (WACET); S de Renzy-Martin (Watchet TC); S Goss, G S Dowding and C Morgan (WSC).

3. Notes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2013 and Matters Arising

The notes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the disabled parking outside the Williton Co-op action being followed up.

Councillor Davies supplied feedback regarding the issue of school transport raised by Holford residents. The response he received from Somerset County Council regarding school transport to Haygrove School stated the following:

Information on entitlement to transport on low income grounds: for secondary school aged pupils free school transport would be provided to a school between 2 and 6 miles from the child's home address as long as the school is one of the three nearest suitable schools. If this was not the case but a pay seat was available this could be offered at a reduced rate. Eligibility for low rate was defined as being entitled to free school meals or in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit.

The difference between catchment and transport areas: catchment areas are set for the purposes of school admissions and every home address is in the catchment area for a particular school or academy. For the purposes of home to school transport SCC operate transport areas which currently mirror the school catchment areas. The

reason they are called transport areas is because if a school or academy choose to change their catchment area the transport area would remain the same and therefore entitlement to transport would not change.

Action: Holford Parish Council to request an officer from SCC attend a future meeting of the Parish Council to provide clarity.

4. Police Report

A verbal report was received from Sergeant 1009 Manu (Williton) on the following:

- Recent road closure on A39 at Bilbrook – the police had liaised with the highways department and a lot of police resources had been used to deal with issues in Watchet. In response to a suggestion that a police officer at Carhampton and Watchet bridge to stop HGV's would have prevented a lot of congestion, Sgt Manu replied that the police could not afford to have two members of staff on 'road block' duty from 9am to 3.30pm for two weeks. The point was made by the Panel Members that SCC had failed by not undertaking the work at night.
- Rape allegation at East Quantoxhead – no other suspect was being sought so the public should not be concerned.
- Operation Tonic drink and drive campaign was up and running.
- Rural thefts were still an issue and there were four current cases under investigation.
- The badger cull had ended.
- The police had recently returned a saddle and tack to a person who had it stolen in 2009.
- The Sergeant confirmed that deer poaching was not on the increase.
- The Panel was advised not to post personal details about being away from home on social media websites.

5. Highways Report

In the absence of David Peake, SCC Highways, Adrian Dyer read out the Highways report on completed, on-going and future works in the Panel area, which is attached at Appendix A. He also conveyed Mr Peake's thanks to all Panel members for their patience and support during the daytime, weekday temporary road closures on the A39 at Dragon's Cross, Bilbrook during the first two weeks in November. It really was much appreciated by the whole highways team involved in this important project.

An issue was raised regarding water flowing down Weacombe Road to the A358 as there was concern that this could turn to ice in the winter. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Meeting would contact the highways agency about the matter.

The Chairman provided the Panel with statistical information on the monitoring of speeding.

6. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

A verbal update was received from Garry Austin-Thompson who advised that the focus would be on seasonal fire safety over the next few months.

7. West Somerset Council

Adrian Dyer reported on the following:

Watchet Esplanade Six new lanterns were installed on the Watchet Esplanade street lights in July. This was a mixture of replacing old lanterns and installing new ones, as some had been removed previously due to severe corrosion. Two more lanterns have now been ordered and should be replaced at the beginning of next year. It was noted that there were bulbs missing in the new lights and Adrian agreed to investigate.

Watchet Landing Stage Work has been ongoing to replace the landing stage on the West Pier. There have been delays as the contractors, Allerford Forge, were not 100% satisfied with the wood they had received so have ordered replacement wood which has now been sourced from Minehead Sawmills. The wood is being delivered on site on 5 December and will hopefully be installed and the work completed on the same day. The actual ladder/landing stage is already in place.

Watchet West Pier An order has been raised to replace the flood defence cage on the West Pier.

Roughmoor Enterprise Centre There are currently three vacant small units on the site at present with hopefully one being occupied in the new year.

CCTV – Watchet Work to install CCTV in the town is progressing well. Funding for this project has been secured from the Police and Crime Commissioner together with the District Council. Watchet Town Council will be meeting the on costs. It is intended that this will go live this financial year.

Williton Car Park The District Council are looking at the possibility of providing two 15 minute parking bays in the main car park.

Goviers Lane Crossing There is to be further tactile surfacing works to extend the current surface. A heritage style lamp is also to be erected. These works are to be carried out and funded by SCC.

Killick Way Public Conveniences A planning application is to be submitted to convert the main pcs in Williton into a workspace area leaving two pcs at the end which will be unisex/disabled/baby change.

Grounds Maintenance The Grounds Maintenance team are continuing to carry out work for both Williton Parish Council and Watchet Town Council. Works in Watchet include grass cutting of the closed churchyard, Doniford play area, West Street car park and the Henry Davey playing field.

A concern was raised regarding the ability of parish councils to respond to planning applications because of a lack of understanding of Planning Laws. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Planning Committee would follow this up and try to arrange a meeting in the new year between relevant officers, members of the Planning Committee and parish/town councils.

A question was asked as to why the minimum stay/charge for parking in the Dunster Steep car park was two hours.

It was noted that no reply had been received from the new Chief Executive following the forwarding of minutes from a meeting of the Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee (WHAC). Adrian explained that it was unreasonable to expect the new Chief Executive to acknowledge receipt of all emails as he certainly did not. It was agreed that Adrian would arrange for the Chairman of the WHAC to be sent confirmation of Penny James' WSC email address.

8. Date of Next Meeting

3 March 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton