

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 8 March 2018 at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead

Present:

Cllr Jean Parbrook (Chair)	Minehead Town Council and West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council and Somerset County Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Benet Allen	West Somerset Council
Cllr Andrew Parbrook	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Roger Thomas	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Ralph Dinnick	Minehead Town Council
David Peake	Somerset County Highways
PC Mark Middleton-Smith	Avon & Somerset Police
PC Sam Donati	Avon & Somerset Police
James Guscott	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Loretta Whetlor	SALC
Ray Tew	Minehead Development Trust
N Hawkins	Resident
Pete Broom	Resident & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road
J Burge	Resident
Steven Heard	Resident
Sam Osborne	Sign Interpreter, AlphaPlus
Caron Wolfenden	Sign Interpreter, Alpha Plus
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Jean Parbrook welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Ron Blundell (Resident), Cath Isherwood (Resident), Colin Isherwood (Resident), Chris Jones (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue), Bridget O'Brien (Resident), Doug Ross (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident), Sandra Slade (Resident), Cllr Maureen Smith (Minehead Town Council and Chair, West Somerset Community Land Trust).

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

- (a) Pete Broom expressed thanks to Marcus Kravis for getting the toilets on the seafront up and running and to the Council for working with him.
- (b) *Jerry Burge asked why there had been no weed spraying of the back lanes in Minehead.* Jean said she would find out.

ACTION: Jean Parbrook to find out why the back lanes in Minehead had not been sprayed with weedkiller.

- (c) *Jerry Burge asked why the annual works on the trees in Summerland Road, Irnham Road, etc. had not been undertaken.* Jean explained that this was a Somerset County Council responsibility. It was suggested that the works could have been delayed due to nesting birds. Benet Allen advised that tree

work was being done in Martlett Road so it appeared that work had commenced. Andrew Parbrook informed the meeting that the arboriculturalist at Somerset County Council had dealt with the difficult issue of the trees in The Avenue and was working through Minehead. Glenmore Road had been surveyed and work had taken place.

- (d) *Steven Heard advised that he had seen on the local news that North Devon Council were controlling dog fouling by spray painting dog mess a bright colour to remind dog owners to pick up after their dogs and to make it more noticeable so that people were less likely to step in it. He asked why this wasn't being done in Minehead.* Mandy Chilcott admitted that the problem of dog fouling was a challenge but explained that each Council had a different approach to tackle it. Spraying was not undertaken in West Somerset and there was no intention to start spraying.
- (e) *Steven Heard stated that the Rose Garden was a problem area for mobility scooters, pushchairs, etc. as tree works had been undertaken and branches left in the Garden.* As the Rose Garden is owned by Minehead Town Council Jean said that she would look into this.

ACTION: Jean Parbrook to look into the issue of tree debris in the Rose Garden.

- (f) Pete Broom asked whether the by-pass between Williton and Carhampton would ever be built. Mandy advised that there was no Government funding available for such works. Currently funding packages surrounded employment land and housing sites rather than new roads. West Somerset Council would still push for a by-pass but currently it was not likely to happen. Major road improvements in Somerset concentrated currently on the dualling of the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields Roundabout on the A303.
- (g) Pete Broom asked when the public consultation took place that resulted in the name of the new District Council as Somerset West and Taunton. Andrew Hadley reported that there had been two full days of consultation at the Beach Hotel and fliers had been circulated. The consultation had been publicised in the West Somerset Free Press.

3. Talk by Ryan Kelly, Community Safety Officer for Sedgemoor and West Somerset

Sadly Ryan did not attend the meeting.

4. Butlins and the Community – Paul Dabner and John Whybrow, Butlins

Both John and Paul are in the operations team at Butlins and were present to represent Butlins and answer any enquiries that the meeting may have.

Mandy expressed her disappointment that resident access to the cinema on the Butlins site had been stopped. John explained that all the Butlins guests wear wristbands, coloured according to the type of break. With residents using the cinema there was concern about not knowing who was on site. However, access to the cinema was available for residents with an annual pass (+ the usual cinema charge). An annual adult pass was £90 and an annual child pass was £55. This provided access to a range of facilities including the fairground and swimming pool. Mandy asked whether it would be possible for those residents who only wished to use the cinema (such as the more elderly population) to have a pass solely for the cinema. John said he would look into this.

ACTION: John Whybrow to look into the possibility of a residents pass solely for use of the cinema.

Benet Allen asked why the Red Arrows air display had stopped. John explained that it was due to the high cost of insurance following the crash at the Shoreham display in 2015. Andrew Hadley added that they had tried to bring the Red Arrows back but the Military Aviation Authority imposed insurance coverage not just on the display but on the whole event/festival site including stalls, activities, etc. which made the cost prohibitive.

It was acknowledged that Butlins increased Minehead's local economy, were the biggest payer in the Business Improvement District and were continuing to fund police officers over the adult weekends.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2018

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Item 3(c): Steven Heard raised the concern of the dry stone wall in the vicinity of the path between Morrisons and Minehead railway station which was in danger of collapse. Mandy Chilcott to chase Somerset County Council regarding the stability of the wall – Mandy advised that the wall had very little mortar and was an unusual design so just mortaring in the bricks was not a solution. She was continuing to work with the relevant department at SCC in order to make the wall safe.

Item 3(c): Steven Heard added that glass had been broken in one of the shelters along the seafront. Andrew Hadley to investigate – Andrew reported that the glass had been reported and repaired.

Item 3(e): Gail Everett raised the issue of sand clearance from The Esplanade and steps to the beach, etc. Jean to write to The Environment Agency to ask them to clear all the sand off the steps to the beach – Jean had written to The Environment Agency regarding sand blowing off Minehead beach and had received the following reply:

'The Environment Agency's established position is that we routinely undertake the annual beach surveys and beach re-profiling twice a year to restore the sand profile on Minehead Beach itself. This is to ensure that the beach profile is maintained along its length, because the beach is integral with the engineered defence wall in providing the required standard of sea defence protection for Minehead. As regards the sand that is blown off the beach, this is cleared by West Somerset District Council. My understanding is that the Council employ contractors to clear the landward side of the defence wall. They then deposit sand on the beach, which can then be re-profiled under our beach maintenance programme. The Environment Agency continues a dialogue with the Council each year to inform of the timings of our work, and this has been the arrangement for a number of years'.

The letter offered more information on the maintenance and re-profiling of the beach if requested.

The meeting asked Jean to pursue further information as a minimum of five of the seven steps needed to be cleared of sand in order to break the force of the waves as part of the sea defences.

ACTION: Jean to approach The Environment Agency in relation to clearing the sand off five of the steps.

Steven Heard raised the issue of drainage in that the gullies needed clearing. Andrew agreed and said that the pipes also required clearing. This was the responsibility of The Environment Agency and dependent on cost.

Item 10: Jean to write to David Peake to thank him and his team for all their hard work in keeping the roads clear in the recent bad weather – this had been done.

6. Minehead Coastal Community Team – An Update

Andrew Kingston-James, secretary to the Team, had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). Andrew Hadley advised that Roger Thomas had stepped down as Chair and Katrina Midgley was the new Chair. She was currently doing a survey of the membership. The shelters on the seafront were being painted, publicity for the Maritime Mile was being produced and a three-week consultation period on the plans for the East Esplanade was currently underway in the Minehead Information Centre in the Beach Hotel, with the hope of starting work later in the year.

Andrew advised that a small bid for funding had been submitted to pay for someone to help with communications and bid writing, which was through to the next stage of the bid process.

Publicity for the projects was being pushed through Facebook and the MCCT website.

7. Minehead Development Trust/Minehead Information Centre – An Update

Ray Tew reported the following:

- There had been no significant changes to Minehead Development Trust (MDT) since the last report in March 2018.
- MDT maintained its proactive support and input to planning works being undertaken by the MCCT initiatives on the Esplanade and elsewhere along the seafront.
- MDT continued in its role as the accountable body and strategic development lead for **Minehead Information Centre (MIC)** which was busy planning for the coming season as follows:

New Minehead Destination Website - Final checks were being undertaken to meet the new launch date during June. Locally produced photos free of any copyright were always required. Staff training was underway this week.

Tourism Newsletter – Consents to issue newsletters under the new GDPR law was continuing. It was a time consuming process to issue, log and chase responses, then amend all the necessary records. June's newsletter would only be sent to those from whom positive consent had been provided, as per the requirements of the new legislation.

Volunteers – Future volunteers were being recruited and trained. More were needed.

Opening Hours - Now on Summer hours (open 6 days): Monday – Closed; Tuesday to Saturday - 10am to 4pm; Sunday - 11am to 4pm and all Bank Holiday Mondays and Mondays throughout the school Summer holidays.

Minehead Guided Walks (town trails) – Work was ongoing to ramp up the publicity in order to get more people on these walks.

The Minehead Information Centre could be found at: The Beach Hotel, The Avenue, Minehead, TA24 5AP. Tel: 01643 702624. Email: minehead.visitor@hotmail.com Website: www.visitminehead.org

8. **Police Report**

PC Joe Sanderson had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). PC Sam Donati was in attendance and reported the following:

- There had been a small rise in shoplifting. The police were working with the shops and CCTV to prevent further cases.
- The Talking Café was taking place every Monday at the Beach Hotel and they were looking at running more Coffee with Cops, probably in the evenings.
- There was a 90's weekend at Butlins this weekend, followed by an 80's weekend over the 15 to 17 June. The police were working well with Butlins, who were pro-active in dealing with troublemakers, immediately removing them from the site
- Using Facebook to appeal for information was proving successful.
- Looking at the statistics in the report and the 391 cases of violence against the person Sam explained that this category was so large because it covered a wide range of offences, including, for example, harsh words across a neighbour's fence.

Sam emphasised that Minehead was a safe place to live but as such it was a constant battle to retain police resources in West Somerset.

9. **Highway Matters**

David Peake reported the following:

Completed Highway Works:

- Carriageway resurfacing of Townsend Road in Minehead.
- Carriageway resurfacing of the A39 Minehead Road west of Bilbrook.
- Carriageway resurfacing of the A39 Minehead Road from the turn-off to Blue Anchor to the Butchers Arms in Carhampton.
- Carriageway patching of the A39 Minehead Road in Washford.

Ongoing Highway Works:

- Carriageway patching on the A39 Doverhay, High Street and Redway in Porlock with temporary road closures between 6.30pm and 11.30pm on 7 June.

Future Highway Works:

- Drainage improvement works on the A39 Minehead Road at Dragons Cross in Bilbrook with temporary road closures between 9.30am and 3.30pm from 5 to 9 November and 12 to 16 November.

Concern was expressed by Jerry Burge about potential traffic disruption on the alternative routes during the daytime road closures of the A39 planned for November and why the work was necessary when the road was no longer prone to flooding. David explained that external funding had been obtained for the work to be done in phases. Two phases had been undertaken and this third phase

would improve the gully catch and the longitudinal drainage for water running off the fields. It was felt to be necessary work to prevent future flooding in times of heavy rainfall. Christine added that both Old Cleeve and Roadwater Parish Councils were very keen for this work to be done.

David stressed that County Highways were in dialogue with First Bus and Butlins regarding the road closure and that the timescale for the works had been reduced from the original four weeks to two weeks.

David advised that Bridget O'Brien, a resident of Minehead had raised concerns that she and her husband over the years had encountered a number of 'near misses' between pedestrians and vehicles at the junction of Blenheim Road and The Avenue in Minehead and Summerland Road and The Avenue and whether a speed restriction of 20mph could be imposed or an extra notice displayed to reduce the risk. David had raised this issue with Jo Sharp, a Traffic Engineer, who had responded as follows:

'I do understand and appreciate any concerns received regarding the safety of pedestrians and can assure you that SCC takes road safety very seriously.

I am pleased to say that I have not received any other letters or reports concerning pedestrian safety at the junction of Blenheim Road and The Avenue. There is an existing Zebra Crossing on The Avenue near The Co-op which provides a safe crossing point for pedestrians in the vicinity of Blenheim Road. There is also an additional pedestrian crossing point marked by dropped kerbs with tactile paving situated on The Avenue, to the east of its junction with Blenheim Road which has a pedestrian refuge area in the centre.

For information the Department for Transport guidance on the introduction of 20mph speed limits is that actual vehicle speeds need to be 24mph or below for a 20mph zone/limit to be introduced. We would therefore require speed readings to be carried out on the areas where the community would like a 20mph limit to be introduced. If the actual speeds are higher than 24mph additional features to reduce the actual speed would need to be implemented in addition to the signing required for a 20mph limit/zone.

A scheme of this nature would be significant in cost and the only way a scheme of this nature could obtain SCC funding would be through the Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) process.

If the speeds are already below 24mph, we have to question the benefits of introducing a scheme where accidents are a rare occurrence and regular Police enforcement is unlikely. In addition to this, measured vehicle speeds are unlikely to change very much after the scheme has been installed. We would also be required to install a number of terminal and repeater signs that would add to the existing street clutter. The benefits of a 20mph zone/limit in these circumstances with signs alone can be limited'.

David informed the meeting that if such a proposal wished to be pursued then Minehead Town Council (MTC) would need to be approached for their approval to the scheme. If in agreement, MTC would need to write to the Traffic Engineer to progress this and there would be a cost to collect the speed readings data.

Steven Heard asked if the footway by the Rugby Club could be widened. David advised that SCC were awaiting news of a funding bid, which if granted could provide monies for roadworks between Minehead and Dunster.

Andrew Parbrook asked if there were any projections on the increase in number of cars in the local area that could be expected in the future, particularly with the

increase in proposed housing, and what the impact would be of extra vehicles on the roads. David replied that there were no figures on traffic growth available. Housing developments tended to take place in urban areas to reduce the necessity for car travel and to encourage cycling, walking, etc. As part of such developments monies could also be provided by the developer towards roads, footways, cycleways, etc.

A resident asked if there could be double yellow lines along The Avenue to prevent parking. Mandy advised that there was a Traffic Regulation Order going through to introduce double yellow lines, more details of which could be found on her Facebook page. Advisory notices were to be drawn up by the Police to discourage people from parking in The Avenue.

Pete Broom stated that there were problems with vehicles speeding at the junction of Bancks Street and The Parade, particularly with the presence of the bus stop and parking spaces. David explained that vehicle speeds would need to be assessed and following this, dependent upon the results, it could lead to a Traffic Regulation Order being needed.

Sam Donati asked whether hatchings could be put on The Butlins roundabout. Mandy stated that she had asked this question in the past of Jo Sharp, the traffic engineer, and been advised that hatchings could not be put on roundabouts.

Following the meeting Mandy contacted the local highways engineer to again ask whether this could be done and it was again confirmed that it was not possible to hatch or mark a roundabout with 'keep clear'. The only exception to this was when a traffic control (eg, traffic lights) was present.

Sam informed the meeting that he was receiving regular calls in respect of parking along Brook Street obstructing the flow of traffic. David explained that this issue had been raised in the past at Minehead Area Panel meetings and a Traffic Regulation Order had been proposed in 2016 for Manor Road in Alcombe, but due to the objections received parking restrictions had not been imposed. Andrew Hadley added that parked cars can be beneficial as they help to keep speeding down.

10. Burning Issues

James Guscott updated the meeting on Fire & Rescue Service activities since the last Panel meeting (see attached report).

11. Town Council Update

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached).

12. District Council Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached).

13. County Council (SCC) Update

Christine Lawrence and Mandy Chilcott reported the following:

- The library consultation period would end on 13 June. Please pop into your local library and have your say.
- SCC were working with mums to be to prevent smoking in pregnancy. This was proving successful with 1000 babies being born in a smoke free zone. This was an ongoing programme.

- The BBC Panorama programme were looking at SCC's work in adult social care, particularly around the good work being done to get people out of hospital and back into their own homes.
- A precept of 3% had been added to the Council Tax bills to go towards adult social care.
- Works on the pavement in Dunster Marsh were to commence.
- Rates bills in Somerset were lower than anywhere else in the country.
- 19,000 pothole repairs had been done.
- Dropped kerbs were to be put in at Cher and in Alcombe for wheelchair users, mobility scooters, etc.
- Accesses at Minehead First School and Minehead Middle School were an ongoing safety concern. Parking Orders were not being strictly adhered to. A bid to the Small Improvement Scheme was to be made in order to look at this.
- There was a shortfall in SCC funding for childrens' services. Teenage self-harm was increasing.
- The Queens Award for Voluntary Service had been given to the Phoenix Centre in Watchet and HomeStart in Minehead.

14. Any Other Business

Publicising the Minehead Area Panel

Jerry Burge felt that more publicity was needed for the Panel meetings as the attendance was low. Jean explained that a press release had been sent to West Somerset Free Press by the District Council but this had not been published. She would be sending a letter to the Free Press in advance of the next meeting in the hope that it would be included. Sarah used to post the agenda and minutes on Facebook, but little interest had been shown. Sarah asked the Councillors to encourage residents within their wards to attend. Mandy Chilcott and Andrew Hadley said that they had been trying over the years to get notices of meetings and events in the Free Press and they tried to get members of the public to attend the Panel meetings, but attendance fluctuated and it was difficult to maintain a good attendance.

Mark Middleton-Smith suggested setting up a live weblink and streaming the meeting. Students from West Somerset College could be asked to help with the technology required.

Sarah advised that details of the Area Panel meetings and associated agendas, reports and minutes were on the West Somerset Council website. The meeting felt that putting this link on Facebook on the Minehead Conversation Group and Minehead Chit Chat could help.

ACTION: Sarah to put a weblink to the Minehead Area Panel page on the West Somerset Council website on Facebook – the Minehead Conversation Group and Minehead Chit Chat.

Activities and Events

Andrew Hadley reported the following:

- The wheel on the seafront would stop giving rides on 18 June.
- Building on last year's successful Festival of Wheels, the Minehead Grand Prix would be taking place on Sunday, 24 June.
- Thundercat speed boat racing would be held on 4 and 5 August in partnership with the final two rounds of the PI AquaX UK Championship.

15. **Dates & Venues of Future Meetings**

Future meeting to be held on:

Wednesday 12 September 2018 at 6.30pm at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Minehead.

Wednesday, 5 December 2018 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead.
Wednesday, 13 March 2019.