

**EXMOOR PANEL  
MINUTES  
Tuesday 6 September 2011  
Winsford Village Hall**

**Those present:**

Steven Pugsley, Chair	
Nick Thwaites, Dulverton TC	Tony Murray, Magna WS
Bernard Foster, Selworthy PC	Frances Nicholson, SCC
Angela Palmer, Porlock PC	F Bray, Winsford PC
Colin Savage, Rural Housing Project	Tessa Saunders, ENPA
David Peake, SCC Highways	Alan Vigars, Exmoor PC
Roger Webber, Cutcombe PCC	Mark de Wynter Smith, Exmoor PC
Jacquie Stares, WSC	Bruce Strachan, A&S Police
Jennifer Stringer, Brompton Regis PC	Tim Taylor Leader, WSC
Bruce Heywood, Cllr WSC	Fred Rawle, Exton PC
Geoff Mason, Timberscombe PC	Kevin Connell, Winsford PC
Katherine Lindop, Winsford PC	Susan Hayes, Winsford PC
Margaret Rawle, Dulverton TC	Keith Ross, Cllr WSC
Keith Turner, Cllr WSC	

**Have Your Say:**

Housing

Magna West Somerset Housing Association (MWS) presented their annual report which gave a background of their housing stock in the area, outlined their functions and services and explained how they are managed and financed.

The housing need in West Somerset is addressed through the Homefinder Somerset Scheme. There are some drawbacks with the scheme and these need to be addressed by encouraging those with a housing need to contact the appropriate bodies and departments for assistance, e.g. Rural Housing Enabler. Parish clerks could encourage people to register on the scheme and could pass on information about any suitable available properties to those with a housing need in their parish.

It was suggested that Parish Councils (PCs) could consider paying 1 weeks rent to the housing provider to give their parishioners more time to express an interest in a property and ensure that the housing provider does not lose out on rental income. MWS get 4 weeks notice when a tenancy is terminated and will look into the possibility of informing PCs of the vacancies.

The lettings are complete at the new scheme in Cutcombe and lettings at the new scheme in Dulverton are expected to go ahead in October.

Under occupation of properties is addressed through the Homefinder Scheme and MWS also offers further help and incentives to encourage households to downsize.

ENPA are looking at strategic options on delivering affordable housing on Exmoor. Hastoe Housing Association has committed to a scheme to build 15 houses in Porlock.

Self-build is another option for affordable housing and there are 2 possible plots in Exton.

Efforts are being made to bring empty homes on line. There are 12 genuinely empty homes on Exmoor and owners are being encouraged to bring these properties forward for occupation.

Options are still being explored for the Simonsbath scheme. There is no time scale yet because of the high cost of renovations.

MWS would welcome PCs to join in the neighbourhood walkabouts they undertake and offered a timetable of these events.

MWS installed air source heat pumps in Timberscombe as a result of complaints from tenants about the use of storage heaters. On evidence from the installation in Stogumber, the pumps are successful and should reduce heating bills. MWS no longer install oil heating in their properties because the outlay to buy the oil is so high.

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Churchill - Luccombe PC, Bruce Lang – WSC, Chris Nelder – Mayor Dulverton and Frank Gabb, D&S Fire & Rescue

## **2 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 June 2011 and Matters Arising**

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 2.2 The minutes of the last meeting were not posted on the WSC website and should be.

## **3 Chairman's Remarks**

There were none.

## **4 Police Issues**

- 4.1 Since the last meeting there have been 52 incidents of crime including thefts from motor vehicles at local beauty spots, thefts of machinery and assaults. A wired car was parked at a local beauty spot with equipment inside e.g. satnav, in an attempt to catch the thieves, but the car and its contents remain intact.
- 4.2 The arrest rate for the area is just under 34%.
- 4.3 Operation Grasp is ongoing and includes an intelligence gathering exercise to try to catch the thieves. The Police are struggling with the problem; the perpetrators are from outside the area and the geography of Exmoor adds to the difficulty.
- 4.4 Owners still need to be more responsible about their machinery; removing ignition keys would be a big help. The marking of property service, offered by the Police, is

still available. Tracking devices for vehicles are available for approximately £120 and individuals could consider buying them themselves.

- 4.5 Police went to Wheddon Cross to direct traffic at the time of a recent crash in Carhampton, that resulted in the road being closed. This Police presence was promised at the last Panel meeting and it worked very well, although there are still a couple of signage issues to address. A press release will outline the route to be taken when/if there is a similar incident.
- 4.6 Police are aware of an incident that took place at Heathpoult last Friday.
- 4.7 Traffic congestion at the lights at Dunster Steep is always a problem when there is a big event locally, but there is little that the Police can do to prevent this.

## **5 Highways**

- 5.1 Roy Takle has retired after 50 years service in Highways and Dennis Quick has moved on to be deputy manager in Taunton. The Panel thanked Dennis for his hard work and support.
- 5.2 Top dressing is just about finished now and the contractors are responsible for removing the 20mph signs.
- 5.3 Current works at Luckwell Bridge should be completed by this Saturday.
- 5.4 Wessex Water are due to start re-lining the water mains in Dulverton, which will mean road closures between October and December. Western Power hope to do some works at the same time.
- 5.5 Re-surfacing is ongoing. Drainage is to be re-newed in Edgcott, Exford.
- 5.6 Discussions are still ongoing about roadworks at Wheddon Cross.
- 5.7 Bolton's prediction for winter is cold!!

## **6 Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue**

- 6.1 Apologies received from Frank Gabb.

## **7 Parish Lengthsman Scheme & Update**

- 7.1 There have been no significant changes, but there are some heartening moves by WSC to further support the scheme within the Devolution and Delegation proposal. However, investigations around this are ongoing.

## **8 Items Brought Forward**

- 8.1 Bags of rubbish are being left beside litter bins in Dulverton causing problems for the road cleaners. This could be because holidaymakers in nearby villages are being told to take their rubbish to Dulverton's tip, but they are not aware of the

opening times. People would be better advised to take their rubbish home with them.

- 8.2 At Kings Brompton Farm there is a bridleway that hasn't been used for 62 years and goes in 2 directions. Two local people have campaigned to have the bridleway opened up and this is due to be done tomorrow, with or without the permission of the farmer. ENPA will remove the stiles at the bridleway and replace them with gates. It is the County's responsibility to maintain paths on the Definitive Map and the ENP is required to perform the County's legal duties. Parish records clearly show the bridleway. A Modification Plan has been put in to the County, but one of the complainants objected to it. The deadline to do the works is 15 October and any delay could result in the County ending up in court. Some modifications are needed to the Definitive Map; there is a process to change it by applying to the County Council and showing why the modification is needed. The Secretary of State is looking into which direction the bridleway should take.
- 8.3 Someone from the County and/or ENPA to attend a future meeting to clarify the above issues.
- 8.4 It is the Annual Open Meeting of the National Park on 29 September 2011 in Porlock Village Hall. There is a drop in session from 4pm-6pm and the main meeting starts at 7pm and it is hoped that Parish Councillors will attend.

**Next meeting: 7.00pm on 1 November 2011 at Winsford Village Hall**

**Meeting closed at 9.40pm.**