

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Tuesday 6 November 2012
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)	A Vigers, Exmoor PC
J Hickman, Exford PC	G Mason, Timberscombe PC
A Palmer, Porlock PC	Susan Hayes, Winsford PC
K Lindop, Winsford PC	J Titcombe, Winsford PC
J Bray, Winsford PC	R Coyne, Dulverton TC
P Griffin, Wootton Courtenay PC	K Mills, WSC
N Twaites, Dulverton TC	Bruce Lang, WSC
K Ross, WSC	
F Nicholson, SCC	
Insp L Simpson, Avon & Somerset Constabulary	

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 R Webber Cutcombe PC; C Nelder and M Rawle Dulverton TC; B Foster Selworthy and Minehead Without PC; T Sanders ENPA; J Edwards and D Peake SCC Highways.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2012 and Matters Arising

- 2.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 2.2 County Councillor Frances Nicholson confirmed that she was still pursuing the possibility of securing a regular attendance at the Panel from a senior corporate officer of Somerset County Council.
- 2.3 County Councillor Frances Nicholson reminded those present that the County Council was holding a Local Choices event on 26 November 2012 at 6.30pm for 7pm at the Washford Village Hall where there would be three workshops relating to county libraries, a proposed community warden scheme and youth issues and encouraged as many people as possible to attend. Several members of the Panel raised the issue of a relationship, if any, between the County Council's proposed community warden initiative and the existing Exmoor Parish Lengthsman Scheme. This matter would be raised at the relevant workshop at the Local Choices event.
- 2.4 The Chairman indicated that from his perspective the open meeting of the Exmoor National Park held at the Memorial Hall in Exford on 12 September 2012 went very well.

3 Police Issues

- 3.1 Inspector Lisa Simpson reported that for the first time for a while non-dwelling burglary had diminished as an issue due to the police having been successful in making a key arrest.

- 3.2 Overall crime figures in the Panel area were down. PCSO's were busy in setting up a merged community speed watch initiative for the parishes of Dulverton and Brushford and providing training in schools relating to child protection matters.
- 3.3 Members of the Panel raised issues regarding the lighting arrangements for the local police station and Lisa agreed to look into this.
- 3.4 Some Panel members made reference to a very useful safe driving event that had been held at Brushford that morning.
- 3.5 There was a request for the police to provide photos of local beat officers that could be published on local websites.
- 3.6 Lisa praised the rural volunteers scheme which had worked very well in the Exmoor area and, in her view, had contributed to reducing the incidence of thefts from vehicles in beauty spot areas. This scheme was currently being considered for a national award.
- 3.7 Lisa was pleased to confirm that no complaints regarding anti-social behaviour in respect of Halloween had been received and to date there had been no adverse reports in regard to firework night activities.
- 3.8 Finally, Lisa confirmed that the badger cull had been postponed along with the additional police resources that were going to be provided to help cope with the situation.

4 SCC Highways Issues

- 4.1 David Peake had given his apologies as he had to Chair another meeting in Taunton and had circulated a list of completed, ongoing and future works for the Exmoor Panel area – attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 In his absence County Councillor Frances Nicholson stepped into the breach and agreed to note down highway related comments made by Panel members and report them back to County Hall. Issues raised by Panel members included:
 - Outstanding work relating to Muddicombe Lane at Exford.
 - Request for warning sign for narrow bridge, Exford.
 - Request to improve the quality of the surface dressing finish at Mill Lane, Exford.
 - Request for work to the Withypool side of the ford at Winsford.
 - Noting that a meeting regarding a new road junction at Porlock was due to be held and a thank you given in regard to the new sign for the campsite at Porlock.
 - Request for the Dulverton services sign at Brompton Regis to be cleaned.
 - Highlighting problems with potholes in Stolford Lane, Brompton Regis.
 - Request that salt bags in isolated rural areas should be kept in suitable containers.
 - Reminder that the problem of overhanging trees particularly at Beulah Chapel and Luckwell Bridge continued to cause concern – recognised that the responsibility usually lay with the private landowners and this was difficult to deal with.
 - Request that the County Council contractor should provide local farmers with a rate for snow clearing and suitable equipment to carry out the work.

5 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues

- 5.1 The Chairman reported that the Exmoor National Park Authority had just undergone a national performance inspection and whilst the results had yet to be formally announced the indications were that the organisation would receive a very good rating and could well be one of the best performing national parks areas in the country. The Panel considered that the organisation should be congratulated on its success.
- 5.2 The Chairman also reported that the next meeting of the Exmoor Parish Consultative Committee was to held on 22 November 2012 in the morning at Withypool and would include the attendance of representatives from both the Somerset and Devon highway authorities.

6 Community Right to Bid Scheme

- 6.1 Bruce Lang reported that the Community Right to Bid provisions of the Localism Act had come into force on 21 September 2012.
- 6.2 The Right to Bid gives voluntary and community groups and town and parish councils the opportunity to nominate local land or buildings to be included on a list of "assets of community value".
- 6.3 Nominations would need to be submitted to West Somerset Council who will make a decision on whether to list the asset within eight weeks. If an asset is listed and at some point in the future the owner decides to dispose of it then the community is notified and has a six week period in which to decide whether to submit a bid to purchase and run the asset. If the community decides not to submit a bid then the asset owner is free to dispose of it on the open market. If the community confirms that it does wish to submit a bid then it has a six month moratorium in which to develop its bid to the asset owner. Unless it is to the community group the asset cannot be disposed of during this period.
- 6.4 If a bid is not received or accepted in the six month period then the asset owner is free to dispose of the asset on the open market for a further period of twelve months.
- 6.5 Details and guidance relating to the process were circulated to those present at the meeting.
- 6.6 Bruce confirmed that details relating to the process could be found on West Somerset Council's website – www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk.
- 6.7 For further information and guidance it was suggested that the best contacts at West Somerset Council were Angela Lamplough who would be acting as the liaison officer for community groups and Kim Batchelor who had been involved in developing the process to be followed.
- 6.8 Various questions regarding the new initiative were raised and it was acknowledged that some of the more detailed issues would only be clarified with the benefit of experience.

7. Parish Lengthsman Scheme

- 7.1 In the absence of Chris Nelder who had given his apologies, Councillor Keith Ross mentioned that it would be important for the future viability of the scheme for either additional parishes to buy in and/or some of the existing contributing parishes to buy extra hours.

8. Other Items

- 8.1 In response to a question from Timberscombe Parish Council it was confirmed that enquiries relating to public rights of way were best first addressed to Somerset County Council.
- 8.2 The County Councillor made reference to the recent County Council Chairman's Awards, some of which had gone to people from the Exmoor Panel area and confirmed that photos of the event were in the process of being circulated to the award winners.
- 8.3 A brief discussion ensued as to the impact of the new Somerset County Council electoral ward boundaries on the operation of the Panel. It was recognised that the Exmoor Panel area would be expanded by having an additional number of parishes. Whilst this would put a further workload on the county councillor duly elected following the May 2013 election, it could make the Panel the main focus for interaction between parish/town councils and their county councillor.
- 8.4 In response to a question raised it was confirmed that if the local authorities concerned were successful in negotiating the establishment of a community benefit fund arising from the proposed Hinkley Point power station development that would be available for communities across West Somerset to bid for then the relevant information would be made available to those communities as soon as was possible.

9 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 24 January 2013 at 7.00 pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 7 March 2013 at 7.00 pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm