

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Tuesday 7 November 2017
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)	C Knight, Brushford PC
J Anson, Cutcombe PC	V White, Cutcombe PC
J Davies, Cutcombe PC	M Rawle, Dulverton TC
N Thwaites, Dulverton TC and WSC	M Ellicott, Exford PC
A Sparling, Luxborough PC	D Powell, Luxborough PC
M McCoy, Porlock PC	R Hall, Porlock PC
D Godsall, Winsford PC	B Flanagan, Winsford PC
T Howard, Withypool & Hawkridge PC	J Davies, Withypool & Hawkridge PC
B Stevens, Avon & Somerset Police	T Saunders, ENPA
F Nicholson, SCC	T Murray, Magna Housing Association
D Peake, SCC Highways	K Harwood, SCC Highways
K Mills, WSC	B Heywood, WSC
B Lang, WSC	S Southwell, Exmoor Rural Housing Network

1 Have your Say and Police Issues

1.1 There were no items raised by those present.

2 Apologies for Absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from P Webber (Selworthy and Minehead Without PC), R Manicom (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service) and Sgt S Williams (Avon and Somerset Police).

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2017 and Matters Arising

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

3.2 Matters arising:

In response to a question, it was reported that information relating to the Somerset West Lottery could be ascertained from the website www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk; it was also reported that sales of tickets were going quite well.

A concern was raised to the effect that it had been reported that Somerset County Council were not generally in favour of tourist brown signs although this comment could not be substantiated by any of those present.

In response to a question, it was agreed that an update in regard to the village signposting project would be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

4 Rural Housing Issues and Housing Needs Survey

4.1 Tony Murray, Managing Director of Magna, and Sue Southwell, Rural Housing Enabler attended to present this item.

- 4.2 Sue Southwell explained that she was a part-time coordinator with her main role being to help people to try and resolve their housing issues; for example trying to get empty properties back into use and setting up a Facebook page to be interactive and help those interested in the issue.
- 4.3 She then focused on the proposed Housing Needs Surveys that were being undertaken around the Exmoor area – see Appendix A.
- 4.4 In addition to those surveys listed in the appendix, West Somerset Council was also proposing to undertake a survey in association with the Onion Collective in Watchet and a questionnaire was to be circulated in Porlock relating to the activities of the Coastal Community Team.
- 4.5 Parishes were invited to let Sue know if they would like their area covered by a survey.
- 4.6 In response to a question as to whether any land had been identified to build new houses on, it was advised that this issue was addressed in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan.
- 4.7 Tony Murray explained that Magna operated mainly in West Somerset and West Dorset with approximately 2,000 houses being provided in the West Somerset area and in the region of £4 million a year was spent on maintaining their stock in the West Somerset district.
- 4.8 The organisation was also now intending to build new houses for rent and low cost home ownership and was seeking government grant aid to support this activity.
- 4.9 The organisation's priority was to help those people whose housing needs were not easily met through the market.
- 4.10 He explained that lettings were made via the Somerset Homefinder process where all vacancies were advertised and people would need to express an interest. To express an interest people would need to be on the Housing Needs Register. He further explained that there were various bands of need and that, where possible, a local connection would raise the priority for people being able to let houses in their own local area.
- 4.11 In response to a question as to why in some instances it did not appear that local people were granted the opportunity to let houses in their local area, he explained that the demand for housing in rural areas was much lower than in the towns but he would look into individual cases to make sure that local connection issues were handled appropriately.
- 4.12 On 15 November 2017 at Cutcombe, the Homefinder Somerset Coordinator was undertaking a training session for any persons wishing to know more about how to use the system and any parishes were welcome to be represented.
- 4.13 In the question and answer session the issue of targeting young people was raised and it was suggested that perhaps more use could be made of social media to make young people in the Exmoor area aware of the Housing Register and Homefinder system.
- 4.14 The Chairman thanked Sue and Tony very much for their attendance.

5 Police Issues

- 5.1 PCSO Brian Stevens attended the meeting and advised the Panel that once again the numbers of crimes in the Panel area were very low and reflected that we were all very lucky to live in such a relatively safe area.
- 5.2 Nevertheless there was no need to be complacent and it was important for all crimes to be reported as without the police being advised there was no way they could help or seek resources to address issues.
- 5.3 One issue that the police were trying to address was the illegal shooting of red deer although it was acknowledged that this was a very difficult crime to detect and once again the police were keen to receive any information from the public.
- 5.4 In response to a question as to whether there was a risk that PCSOs in the Somerset area were to be reduced, PC Stevens confirmed that the latest information he had been aware of was that there were no such plans to reduce the number of PCSOs in the area.
- 5.5 The Chairman thanked PCSO Stevens for his attendance.

6 SCC Highways

- 6.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake attended the meeting and presented their planned works in the Exmoor Panel area – the report is attached at Appendix B to the notes of this meeting.
- 6.2 Maps were distributed at the meeting showing the location of salt bins and bags in the various parish areas and any requests in this regard should be submitted to the Highways Authority by no later than 20 November 2017. The open day for collecting salt supplies had been fixed for 25 November 2017, with all parishes having been written to in this regard.
- 6.3 Various detailed questions were put forward by members of the Panel to the County Highways representatives.
- 6.4 Some of the questions related to road diversions and finding out up to date information in this regard. The Highways representatives referred Panel members to the Travel Somerset site - <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks/>
- 6.5 The Withypool Parish Council thanked the Highways representatives for their prompt response in dealing with pothole issues in Sandyway Road.
- 6.6 The Highways representatives requested that if anyone spotted diversion signs being put in the wrong place to please let the Highways Authority know.
- 6.7 A general concern was raised about the danger of slippery roads for horse riders in some parts of the Exmoor Panel area.
- 6.8 The Chairman thanked the Highways representatives for attending, wishing David a Happy Birthday and Karin all the best for her forthcoming happy event.

7 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services Issues

7.1 There was no report submitted in this regard.

8 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues

8.1 Tessa Saunders reported that the Local Plan had been adopted in July 2017 and was now available on the website. Hard copies of the Plan were available at the Exmoor National Park and West Somerset Council offices for inspection and CDs/copies of the Plan would be circulated to all parish and town councils in due course.

8.2 In addition, a landscape supplementary planning document was being consulted on with a view to it being adopted in the near future and there was ongoing consultation in regard to the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan which was due to be adopted in 2018.

8.3 In response to a question, it was confirmed that the 2014 average household income for households in the West Somerset part of the Exmoor National Park area was in the region of £28,000 per annum.

8.4 It was agreed that a briefing on the Exmoor National Park housing policies would be made to the next meeting of the Panel.

9 Parish Lengthsman Scheme Update

9.1 It was reported that the Clerk to Dulverton Town Council had sent a letter to all participating parishes on 26 September 2017 and was still awaiting responses from Exton, Timberscombe and Wootton Courtenay. It was agreed that responses for these parishes would be followed up.

10 Parish Issues

10.1 Cutcombe Parish Council representative made reference to leaflets promoting the Exmoor Community Youth Club and encouraged all those present to raise the profile of the organisation.

10.2 It was requested an update on the broadband project should be brought to either the January or March 2018 Panel meeting, and Tessa Saunders of the Exmoor National Park agreed to arrange for this to happen.

11 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 16 January 2018 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 8 March 2018 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm