

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 8 March 2017 at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead

Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Resident
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Terry Venner	Somerset County Council & West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Maureen Smith	Minehead Town Council and Transition Minehead & Alcombe
James Barraha	Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
PC Joe Sanderson	Avon & Somerset Police
PS Stuart Williams	Avon & Somerset Police
Ray Tew	Minehead Development Trust
Peter Broom	Resident & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road
John Vicary	Resident
Doug Ross	Resident
Colin Isherwood	Resident
Bridget O'Brien	Resident
Paul Johnson	Resident
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Ron Blundell (Resident and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road), Anne Clarke (Manor Road/Staunton Lane Neighbourhood Watch), Cllr Gail Everett (Minehead Town Council), James Guscott (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Chris Jones (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), Cllr Andy Lewis (Minehead Town Council), Diane Partridge (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident).

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

(a) Sandra advised that John Vicary had emailed to ask what items would be collected as part of Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More scheme. The required information had been looked into and Sandra reported that the collection would include additional capacity for cardboard; plastic pots, tubs and trays; small electrical items and batteries. This was in addition to the usual materials collected. John asked for clarification on the types of plastic which could be recycled by the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) and whether it would include tetra paks. Maureen Smith advised that at the moment only plastic bottles could be recycled and she understood Recycle More would take all plastic food packaging. Andrew Hadley felt it wouldn't include tetra paks. He added that

SWP were acquiring new vehicles for Recycle More and the initiative would be rolled out across Somerset. West Somerset was likely to be included in the later stages. The trials had been successful even though it meant a three week rather than the current two week rubbish collection. The meeting agreed that many things that were currently classed as 'rubbish' could be recycled and this reduced the need for frequent rubbish collections. It was a case of educating people to recycle more.

(b) Bridget O'Brien reported that the closure of Acorns Nursery at West Somerset College was contrary to what Gregg Mockeridge, the Deputy Headteacher of the College, had implied at the Minehead Area Panel meeting on 14 September 2016. This would be noted in the minutes.

3. Election of Chair

James Barrahan explained the role of the Chair and how Sandra was an excellent and very hard working Chair. He presented her with a gift on behalf of the Panel. He also thanked Sarah for doing the minutes and presented her with flowers on behalf of the Panel.

Sandra agreed to continue as the Chair of the Panel for one more year. This would be her seventh year as Chair. Ray Tew proposed and Doug Ross seconded that Sandra be re-elected to the role of Chair and everyone agreed. Sandra was duly re-elected.

A discussion took place on how the Panel could encourage a higher attendance and more particularly a new Chair from 2018. Sandra advised that she often wrote letters to the West Somerset Free Press promoting future meetings, but they were not always published. Doug suggested that a press release would be more successful with a photo of Sandra. James agreed to look into this with the Council's Media and Communications Officer next year. Andrew suggested an inclusion in the Community Matters newsletter which was sent to Parish/Town Councils, community organisations, etc.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

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ACTION: Sarah to chase.

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The meeting agreed that it was difficult to know the functions of each tier of local authority, particularly when some tasks were contracted out to a different Council to undertake. Sandra had previously been in the position of Information Officer and had provided information to the public on who did what and the responsibilities of each Council. A contacts guide had also been produced. James informed that today this information was all on the websites, but acknowledged that these were not particularly easy for the lay person to understand and depended on access to the internet. Andrew felt that transformation – the future re-working and restructuring of West Somerset and Taunton Deane Borough Councils – should make access to such knowledge easier. Maureen added that a unitary authority would solve the problem.

5. Minehead Coastal Community Team – An Update

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). Andrew Hadley and Ray Tew verbally reported that the Minehead Coastal Community Team were working hard to make The Esplanade and the Harbour more inviting, under the banner of 'Enterprising Minehead'. Bids for funding for separate pieces of work had been submitted to the Coastal Communities Fund and the Hinkley Community Impact Mitigation Fund

6. Minehead Development Trust – An Update

Ray Tew reported that he was now Acting Chair of the Minehead Development Trust (MDT) as Jenny Lennon-Wood was moving to pastures new. The group had been set up ten years ago when there was a prospect of the old hospital becoming available for use as a community hub. More recently MDT had come to a turning point when they realised that they could no longer negotiate with the two new owners of the building. Minehead Connect CIC had recently become established and MDT were providing the new group with the benefit of their knowledge and research so that Minehead Connect could communicate with the new owners, in an attempt to move forward and provide enhanced and vibrant community facilities for Minehead.

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The policing of five Butlins music weekends had been organised, when four extra police officers paid by Butlins would be on patrol in Minehead from 9am to 6pm. Joe would let Sarah know the dates of these weekends for inclusion in the minutes.

ACTION: Joseph Sanderson to send details of the Butlins weekends to Sarah for inclusion in the minutes.

It was noted that Town Watch, which enabled shops, pubs, etc. to be in communication each other was very effective during these weekends and the Police also maintained radio contact with Butlins and kept them informed of any trouble caused by Butlins visitors. Butlins were very supportive of any potential evictions from the resort.

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- Online.
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was often unaware of the town's late night economy and found groups of young adults intimidating.

The meeting agreed that West Somerset was still one of the safest places to live in the country and were reassured to hear that the Police wished to keep it that way.

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The meeting felt that there were insufficient parking spaces today for the number of cars on the road, and that the planners were approving new residential developments with insufficient parking spaces per dwelling. Andrew Hadley advised that there were rules dictating the number of parking spaces a new dwelling should have and that the Planning Authority were reliant on the comments received from Somerset County Highways on any particular scheme and whether they put forward any objections.

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Mandy Chilcott added that there was a policy in place to transfer land to Minehead Town Council and that new drainage was to be put in place for the toilets in Blenheim Gardens and Summerland Road car park. A resident asked how the Town Council could afford to run the toilets and maintain the land whereas the District Council couldn't. Mandy explained that the Town/Parish Councils could raise their precept to pay for extra staff, etc. as needed. The District Council, on the other hand, had lost 25-30% of their funding over the last few years which had led to significant cuts in employee numbers. The meeting expressed the view that they didn't mind paying more for services if it got the work done.

10. District Council Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). James reported that transformation – the restructuring required for the Council in order to reduce costs – was ongoing. The public consultation on the formation of the new Council for West Somerset and Taunton Deane – had recently closed. The results of this would be collated and used to move forwards.

James also reported on a new community lottery - Somerset West Lottery – a joint Local Authority Lottery for West Somerset and Taunton Deane, which would be launched to the public in June 2017. Two lottery applications (one for each Council) had been made to the Gambling Commission for licences. The aim was to have a weekly online lottery to raise money for good causes in both Council areas. All West Somerset good causes supported by the lottery would benefit West Somerset and its residents and likewise for Taunton Deane.

The Lottery would provide the opportunity to create a new income stream for local voluntary and community organisations, enabling them to continue or develop new services in order to assist residents with their needs. It was a new approach following the initiative of other local authorities, such as Aylesbury, where it was proving successful for small voluntary organisations who did not have the capacity to undertake hours of application form filling for funding or lengthy bidding processes.

The Councils would be the enablers for the Lottery and use the services of an external lottery manager to run the scheme. The Councils would not benefit from any of the proceeds and the costs of running the lottery would be met from the ticket sales. For every £1 lottery ticket sold 50p would go to the good cause of the player's choice and 10p would go to other good causes via a Community Fund managed by the Councils. (This compares to 28% when playing the National Lottery.)

Subject to approval from the Gambling Commission, the Somerset West Lottery would be launched to good causes on 16 May 2017, in the morning at West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton and in the evening at the Albermarle Centre, Albermarle Road, Taunton. These events would be open to any good cause in West Somerset or Taunton Deane, such as sports clubs, community groups and charities, and would be an opportunity for them to find out how the Lottery would work and decide if it was a suitable fundraising opportunity. There would be no charge for local organisations to sign up as a good cause.

The Lottery would be launched to the public in June 2017, when lottery tickets would be available online via the Somerset West Lottery website. Tickets to cost £1 per week and each ticket would have a 1 in 50 chance of winning a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000.

James urged those present that if they knew of any voluntary or community sector organisations or sports clubs who would like an invitation to the morning or evening good causes launch event on 16 May 2017, to please email Gail Sloman on gksloman@westsomerset.gov.uk with the contact details. Any queries regarding the Lottery could be directed to Angela Summers on 01984 635318 or asummers@westsomerset.gov.uk

Maureen Smith stated that she had reservations regarding this initiative as the charitable/community organisations needed to do their own publicity to encourage people to participate in the Lottery and many did not have the time to do this. Also, some charitable organisations objected to gambling and thus would not wish to be involved.

Overall the meeting hoped that the Lottery West Somerset would ultimately benefit the local community.

11. Highway Matters

David Peake provided an update on the proposed pedestrian crossing for Bircham Road in that there were two options available for its location and circulated plans showing these options to the meeting (see attached).

Option One

A single controlled pelican crossing on the north side of Bircham Road by West Somerset College. This option would involve moving the bus stop from its current position on grass/mud to a consolidated kerbway and forming a shared cycleway/walkway. This option was the cheaper option @ £122,000 as the installation of the crossing, etc. only involved highways land.

Option Two

A double controlled pelican crossing – one for pedestrians and one for cyclists – with a shared use cycleway/walkway, on the south side of Bircham Road. This option was more expensive @ £158,000 as it involved a more sophisticated crossing and obtaining a landowner's permission to remove a stone wall and rebuild it further back.

David agreed to email copies of the plans for the two options to Sarah so that she could email them to the Panel and ascertain their comments.

ACTION: David to email copies of the plans to Sarah for onward circulation to the Panel and requesting their comments.

This has been done.

Cllr Terry Venner stated that he preferred option one as it was easier and quicker to implement. Both Minehead Town Council and the Governing Body had approved the crossing in principle, now the two options would go to them, and to local residents, for their consideration. He hoped that it would be implemented by September 2017, ready for the start of the 2017/18 academic year. It was hoped to fund it through County's Small Improvement Scheme and S106 monies from the Ellicombe Meadow development.

Doug asked whether option one could be installed and option two kept for the future if the demand arose. David replied that this was a possibility in theory, but that if the landowner didn't give his/her agreement to moving the wall option two would not be feasible. A compulsory purchase would not be put in force.

Sandra on behalf of the Area Panel thanked Councillors Terry Venner and Christine Lawrence for all their hard work in getting this project so far.

12 . County Council Update

Terry Venner spoke to the written report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached) and reported the following:

- The County Council elections would be held in May 2017.
- The County Council would be increasing their element of the Council Tax by 3.99%, this equated to 2% for social care and 1.99% for the general pot.
- Somerset County Council had overspent by about £24 million.
- The no. 11 town bus service would be kept running for one year.
- Resident parking was likely to become a big issue over the next 12 to 18 months, particularly as Summerland Avenue, Summerland Road, Irnham Road, Bancks Street Selbourne Place, etc were being used by workers and shoppers wishing to access the town centre easily. Mandy Chilcott advised that a new policy for resident parking was being drawn up by Somerset County Council.

13. Any Other Business

Cllr Maureen Smith advised that there would be a meeting on fracking from 7pm to 9pm on Friday, 10 March in the Avenue Methodist Church Hall.

14. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

Future meetings to be held on:

Wednesday, 7 June 2017 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Alcombe, Minehead (next to the fire station)

Wednesday, 11 October 2017 at 6.30pm at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe, Minehead.

Thursday, 8 March 2018 – venue to be confirmed.

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The Lottery would be launched to the public in June 2017, when lottery tickets would be available online via the Somerset West Lottery website. Tickets to cost £1 per week and each ticket would have a 1 in 50 chance of winning a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000.

James urged those present that if they knew of any voluntary or community sector organisations or sports clubs who would like an invitation to the morning or evening good causes launch event on 16 May 2017, to please email Gail Sloman on gksloman@westsomerset.gov.uk with the contact details. Any queries regarding the Lottery could be directed to Angela Summers on 01984 635318 or asummers@westsomerset.gov.uk

Maureen Smith stated that she had reservations regarding this initiative as the charitable/community organisations needed to do their own publicity to encourage people to participate in the Lottery and many did not have the time to do this. Also, some charitable organisations objected to gambling and thus would not wish to be involved.

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David agreed to email copies of the plans for the two options to Sarah so that she could email them to the Panel and ascertain their comments.

ACTION: David to email copies of the plans to Sarah for onward circulation to the Panel and requesting their comments.

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Cllr Terry Venner stated that he preferred option one as it was easier and quicker to implement. Both Minehead Town Council and the Governing Body had approved the crossing in principle, now the two options would go to them, and to local residents, for their consideration. He hoped that it would be implemented by September 2017, ready for the start of the 2017/18 academic year. It was hoped to fund it through County's Small Improvement Scheme and S106 monies from the Ellicombe Meadow development.

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Sandra on behalf of the Area Panel thanked Councillors Terry Venner and Christine Lawrence for all their hard work in getting this project so far.

12 . County Council Update

Terry Venner spoke to the written report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached) and reported the following:

- The County Council elections would be held in May 2017.
- The County Council would be increasing their element of the Council Tax by 3.99%, this equated to 2% for social care and 1.99% for the general pot.
- Somerset County Council had overspent by about £24 million.
- The no. 11 town bus service would be kept running for one year.
- Resident parking was likely to become a big issue over the next 12 to 18 months, particularly as Summerland Avenue, Summerland Road, Irnham Road, Bancks Street Selbourne Place, etc were being used by workers and shoppers wishing to access the town centre easily. Mandy Chilcott advised that a new policy for resident parking was being drawn up by Somerset County Council.

13. Any Other Business

Cllr Maureen Smith advised that there would be a meeting on fracking from 7pm to 9pm on Friday, 10 March in the Avenue Methodist Church Hall.

14. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

Future meetings to be held on:

Wednesday, 7 June 2017 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Alcombe, Minehead (next to the fire station)

Wednesday, 11 October 2017 at 6.30pm at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe, Minehead.

Thursday, 8 March 2018 – venue to be confirmed.

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Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 8 March 2017 at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead

Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Resident
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Terry Venner	Somerset County Council & West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Maureen Smith	Minehead Town Council and Transition Minehead & Alcombe
James Barra	Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
PC Joe Sanderson	Avon & Somerset Police
PS Stuart Williams	Avon & Somerset Police
Ray Tew	Minehead Development Trust
Peter Broom	Resident & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road
John Vicary	Resident
Doug Ross	Resident
Colin Isherwood	Resident
Bridget O'Brien	Resident
Paul Johnson	Resident
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Ron Blundell (Resident and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road), Anne Clarke (Manor Road/Staunton Lane Neighbourhood Watch), Cllr Gail Everett (Minehead Town Council), James Guscott (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Chris Jones (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), Cllr Andy Lewis (Minehead Town Council), Diane Partridge (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident).

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

(a) Sandra advised that John Vicary had emailed to ask what items would be collected as part of Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More scheme. The required information had been looked into and Sandra reported that the collection would include additional capacity for cardboard; plastic pots, tubs and trays; small electrical items and batteries. This was in addition to the usual materials collected. John asked for clarification on the types of plastic which could be recycled by the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) and whether it would include tetra paks. Maureen Smith advised that at the moment only plastic bottles could be recycled and she understood Recycle More would take all plastic food packaging. Andrew Hadley felt it wouldn't include tetra paks. He added that

SWP were acquiring new vehicles for Recycle More and the initiative would be rolled out across Somerset. West Somerset was likely to be included in the later stages. The trials had been successful even though it meant a three week rather than the current two week rubbish collection. The meeting agreed that many things that were currently classed as 'rubbish' could be recycled and this reduced the need for frequent rubbish collections. It was a case of educating people to recycle more.

(b) Bridget O'Brien reported that the closure of Acorns Nursery at West Somerset College was contrary to what Gregg Mockeridge, the Deputy Headteacher of the College, had implied at the Minehead Area Panel meeting on 14 September 2016. This would be noted in the minutes.

3. Election of Chair

James Barraah explained the role of the Chair and how Sandra was an excellent and very hard working Chair. He presented her with a gift on behalf of the Panel. He also thanked Sarah for doing the minutes and presented her with flowers on behalf of the Panel.

Sandra agreed to continue as the Chair of the Panel for one more year. This would be her seventh year as Chair. Ray Tew proposed and Doug Ross seconded that Sandra be re-elected to the role of Chair and everyone agreed. Sandra was duly re-elected.

A discussion took place on how the Panel could encourage a higher attendance and more particularly a new Chair from 2018. Sandra advised that she often wrote letters to the West Somerset Free Press promoting future meetings, but they were not always published. Doug suggested that a press release would be more successful with a photo of Sandra. James agreed to look into this with the Council's Media and Communications Officer next year. Andrew suggested an inclusion in the Community Matters newsletter which was sent to Parish/Town Councils, community organisations, etc.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Item 5 - A resident had advised that the gutter at the junction of Warden Road and Alexandra Road often became full of leaves and debris after heavy rain and asked if it could be cleared. Sandra had written to Customer Services at West Somerset Council to instruct the relevant contractor to clear the gutter: Mr Johnson reported that the gutter had been cleared, but that it needed to be cleared on a regular basis to prevent blockages.

The resident had also advised that the street name sign for Warden Road, which had been located outside no. 1, had disappeared. Sandra had written to Customer Services at West Somerset Council to instruct the relevant contractor to replace the street name sign for Warden Road. Mr Johnson reported that the sign had not been replaced.

ACTION: Sarah to chase.

Sarah discovered that a replacement sign had been ordered by West Somerset Council and would be erected in due course.

Item 13 – A resident asked whether the electricity was left turned on in the closed toilets. Sarah had found out that all utilities were turned off.

The meeting agreed that it was difficult to know the functions of each tier of local authority, particularly when some tasks were contracted out to a different Council to undertake. Sandra had previously been in the position of Information Officer and had provided information to the public on who did what and the responsibilities of each Council. A contacts guide had also been produced. James informed that today this information was all on the websites, but acknowledged that these were not particularly easy for the lay person to understand and depended on access to the internet. Andrew felt that transformation – the future re-working and restructuring of West Somerset and Taunton Deane Borough Councils – should make access to such knowledge easier. Maureen added that a unitary authority would solve the problem.

5. Minehead Coastal Community Team – An Update

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). Andrew Hadley and Ray Tew verbally reported that the Minehead Coastal Community Team were working hard to make The Esplanade and the Harbour more inviting, under the banner of 'Enterprising Minehead'. Bids for funding for separate pieces of work had been submitted to the Coastal Communities Fund and the Hinkley Community Impact Mitigation Fund

6. Minehead Development Trust – An Update

Ray Tew reported that he was now Acting Chair of the Minehead Development Trust (MDT) as Jenny Lennon-Wood was moving to pastures new. The group had been set up ten years ago when there was a prospect of the old hospital becoming available for use as a community hub. More recently MDT had come to a turning point when they realised that they could no longer negotiate with the two new owners of the building. Minehead Connect CIC had recently become established and MDT were providing the new group with the benefit of their knowledge and research so that Minehead Connect could communicate with the new owners, in an attempt to move forward and provide enhanced and vibrant community facilities for Minehead.

The Minehead Information Centre based at the Beach Hotel was MDT's continuing success and was funded by a range of organisations. MDT was part of HTAP – Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership – a body which aimed to make everyone aware, both within and outside of Somerset that Hinkley Point C was only a very small part of Somerset and that the County was still open for business. Much work was going on to make Somerset more attractive to potential visitors.

Ray added that planning permission had been obtained by the old hospital for Change of use from community hospital (Class C2) to community hub (Class D1), Assembly Room (Class D2), café (Class A3) four apartments (Class C3), associated parking and public open space. Bringing the building back to life would take a very long time, particularly as, due to the costs involved, it would be done on a piecemeal basis. The owners were, of course, anxious to make a return on their investment and MDT hoped that Minehead Connect would be able to work with them in order to fulfil the aims of all parties.

7. **Police Report**

PC Joseph Sanderson had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). He explained that the report illustrated the new way that crime statistics were being collated. Crime was generally less during the Winter months. There were proposed changes to the anti-social behaviour order which would make the Police's role in managing anti-social behaviour easier, eg, very specific areas of non-drinking zones would be extended to much larger areas. This would make Minehead easier to be policed as far as drinking, etc. in the town was concerned. The current public place designation zones in West Somerset could be found at: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Community---Living/Community-Safety/Public-Place-Designation-Zones

The policing of five Butlins music weekends had been organised, when four extra police officers paid by Butlins would be on patrol in Minehead from 9am to 6pm. Joe would let Sarah know the dates of these weekends for inclusion in the minutes.

ACTION: Joseph Sanderson to send details of the Butlins weekends to Sarah for inclusion in the minutes.

It was noted that Town Watch, which enabled shops, pubs, etc. to be in communication each other was very effective during these weekends and the Police also maintained radio contact with Butlins and kept them informed of any trouble caused by Butlins visitors. Butlins were very supportive of any potential evictions from the resort.

Police Sergeant Stuart Williams introduced himself. He had a team of 20 officers covering an area including Exmoor, Minehead, Watchet and Williton and ranging to Wellington. The location of his team varied according to need. He encouraged those present to report crime in the following ways:

- Front office at Minehead Police Station 10am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.
- Online.
- 999 if a crime was in progress and a quick response was needed.
- 101 if the crime was low level and a quick response was not needed.

Joe advised that the Police were currently targeting drug supply in Minehead, which was increasing in the town, and urged people to come forward if they had any knowledge on this issue. Mandy Chilcott said that she was aware of residents who had provided details of drug supply at the local Police station, but nothing had happened. Joe was surprised by this and assured Mandy that if she asked the residents to return to the station and ask for him, he would be happy to speak with them.

Mandy added that she had experienced problems trying to speak to a police officer as the call centre had only permitted email interaction which had been problematic, protracted and not provided an answer to her query. If no-one was available to speak to, she would prefer to leave her tel. no. and receive a call-back.

Doug Ross praised the formatting of the crime figures in that they were clear and well laid out. He did, however, wonder why 'violence against the person' had increased so much in the last 12 months. Joe explained that this was due to Home Office changes in the way some crimes were recorded. Doug added that he was pleased to hear that the Police were concentrating on drug activity as he had seen local youngsters start on mild drugs and then deteriorate over the years as they became addicted to stronger substances. Sandra felt that the elderly population of Minehead

was often unaware of the town's late night economy and found groups of young adults intimidating.

The meeting agreed that West Somerset was still one of the safest places to live in the country and were reassured to hear that the Police wished to keep it that way.

8. Burning Issues

Chris Jones had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached). Sandra pointed out 'The Tighter the Gap – the Slower the Response' part of the report which highlighted the need for drivers to be aware of the Highway Code and when parking not to leave vehicles in a dangerous position or where it caused an unnecessary obstruction of the road and not to stop or park anywhere that would prevent access for the Emergency Services or opposite or within 10 metres of a junction, except in an authorised parking space. She asked everyone to spread the word.

Paul Johnson stated that vehicles were being parked on double yellow lines, etc. and felt that the Police should be preventing this. Joe advised that this role no longer fell to the Police to undertake unless there was wilful obstruction of the highway and dangerous parking. This duty now was the responsibility of the District Council who had contracted the work to Somerset County Council. The County Council, in partnership with parking contractor, NSL, enforced all on-street parking in Somerset. The Civil Enforcement Officers patrolled Minehead, but not on a very frequent basis.

The meeting felt that there were insufficient parking spaces today for the number of cars on the road, and that the planners were approving new residential developments with insufficient parking spaces per dwelling. Andrew Hadley advised that there were rules dictating the number of parking spaces a new dwelling should have and that the Planning Authority were reliant on the comments received from Somerset County Highways on any particular scheme and whether they put forward any objections.

9. Town Council Update

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached) and read by Sandra to those present.

Mandy Chilcott added that there was a policy in place to transfer land to Minehead Town Council and that new drainage was to be put in place for the toilets in Blenheim Gardens and Summerland Road car park. A resident asked how the Town Council could afford to run the toilets and maintain the land whereas the District Council couldn't. Mandy explained that the Town/Parish Councils could raise their precept to pay for extra staff, etc. as needed. The District Council, on the other hand, had lost 25-30% of their funding over the last few years which had led to significant cuts in employee numbers. The meeting expressed the view that they didn't mind paying more for services if it got the work done.

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