

**EXMOOR PANEL  
MINUTES  
Thursday 9 June 2016  
Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross**

**Those present:**

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| S Pugsley (Chair)                           | J Davis, Cutcombe PC                |
| V White, Cutcombe PC                        | J Anson, Cutcombe PC                |
| E Norman, Cutcombe PC                       | M Rawle, Dulverton TC               |
| M Willison, Dulverton TC                    | M Ellicott, Exford PC               |
| D Powell, Luxborough PC                     | C Wilkins, Winsford PC              |
| T Howard, Withypool & Hawkridge PC          | T Saunders, ENPA                    |
| R Partridge, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue | F Nicholson, SCC                    |
| D Peake & K Harwood, SCC Highways           | K Mills, WSC                        |
| B Heywood, WSC                              | B Lang, WSC                         |
| E Norman                                    | R Davies, Community Catalysts C.I.C |

**1 Have Your Say**

- 1.1 It was noted that there was no police representative at the meeting and although there was some conjectures to whether this was due to the work commitments or not receiving the usual notice, a check will be made to see if there had been any reason for this. It was regrettable as the “have your say” item was specifically included on the agenda to assist the police in their work.
- 1.2 There were no issues raised under this item.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from R Manicom (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Cllr A Spalling (Luxborough PC), C Knight (Brushford PC), Cllr J Hickman (Exford PC) and Cllr N Thwaites (Dulverton TC and WSC).

**3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2016 and Matters Arising**

- 3.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 3.2 Matters arising:

It was confirmed that a representative of the West Somerset Flood Group would be attending to provide an update to the Panel at its next meeting to be held on 6 September 2016 and that the Somerset Waste Partnership had also confirmed that they would be sending a representative to the September meeting.

County Councillor Frances Nicholson reported that the West Somerset Flood Group had received £1,000 award from the Princes' Trust in acknowledgement of their good work and the Panel congratulated the Group in this respect.

## **4 Somerset Micro-enterprise Project**

- 4.1 Rhys Davies of the Somerset Micro-enterprise Project attended the meeting.
- 4.2 Rhys explained that the Project is delivered in partnership by Somerset County Council and Community Catalysts and offers free support, advice and information to people who have an idea for a small, local service (called a micro-enterprise) that supports or cares for people in their community.
- 4.3 The Project had been running for some 18 months and to-date over 80 new providers were in existence as a result of the work. Rhys gave examples of real stories in this respect and handed out an information leaflet – attached as an appendix to the minutes of this meeting. Parishes were encouraged to spread the word in regard to the partnership and approach Rhys if they felt they would like to be involved in any way. Rhys' contact details are 07595 411945 or email [rhys.davies@communitycatalysts.co.uk](mailto:rhys.davies@communitycatalysts.co.uk)
- 4.4 Various questions were raised by members of the Panel and the Chairman thanked Rhys for his very interesting presentation.

## **6 Police Issues**

- 6.1 In the absence of a police representative no presentation from the police was available.
- 6.2 Members of the Panel did place on record their thanks to Cutcombe Parish Council, particularly Eric Norman, for the successful establishment of the CCTV project in the village which provided cameras to cover the main junction in the centre of the settlement.
- 6.3 On a separate subject, an observation was made that whilst poachers on the western side of the moor had been arrested there were subsequently let out on bail and proceeded to carry on poaching the very next day!

## **7 SCC Highways**

- 7.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake from Somerset County Council Highways attended for this item and went through planned works for the Exmoor Panel area as set out in the appendix to the minutes of this meeting.
- 7.2 Reference was made to the fact that the A396 project to strengthen the steep embankment had been very successful and had been put forward for a major engineering award for a 'small project' and was also part of a 'people's choice' competition and all were encouraged to vote for the project although the closing date was 10 June 2016! In addition, Karin's presentation on the efficiencies to be obtained from modern gritter technologies was at the "Cold Comfort 2016" conference in Manchester and the Surveyor magazine rated her as "excellent" in their June edition.
- 7.3 Members of the Panel agreed that this was a very worthy achievement and the Highways representatives were given a round of applause.
- 7.4 At discussion ensued around the proposed road closure at Withypool where a balance was being sought between the need to undertake the most effective engineering

solution whilst ensuring that the interests of local businesses were taken into consideration.

- 7.5 The Withypool Parish Council representative confirmed that he had spoken to several local businesses and set out the options and the unanimous view had been to support a compromise 11 day closure to ensure that the pipe repairs could be undertaken effectively.
- 7.6 The Highways officers were thanked for their efforts in achieving the best possible compromise in all the circumstances.
- 7.7 In response to a question, it was confirmed that a date was still awaited for the proposed resurfacing works at Jury Road, Dulverton.
- 7.8 In response to a question, the County Councillor explained the difficulties behind the delay in erecting the agreed 30mph speed limit signs in Winsford, although it was hoped that a solution would be reached in the near future. A request from Luccombe Parish Council to look to improve the road surface in the vicinity of Horner to enhance the safety of horse riders was also raised as was the issue of providing speed limit road markings on the road.
- 7.9 The Chairman thanked the SCC Highways representatives for a most constructive and positive presentation.

## **8 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Issues**

- 8.1 Rob Partridge, the Acting Watch Manager for the Dulverton Station presented reports on behalf of Porlock and Dulverton fire stations which are included as appendices to the minutes of this meeting.

## **9 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues**

- 9.1 Tessa Saunders reported that on 6 May 2016 the draft Exmoor National Park Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State. The Examination was due to be held at the Exmoor National Park offices, Dulverton for three days commencing on 12 July 2016 and this would be open to the public. It is hoped that a new plan could be adopted early in 2017.
- 9.2 Reference was made to complaints that had been received in regard to a mountain bike event on 2 May 2016 and it was confirmed that this was being looked into.
- 9.3 An interesting discussion ensued regarding parking of travelling caravans overnight around the moor as whilst there had been some concerns for such a practice, it was recognised that this was a potentially large tourist market that could bring benefits to the area. Subsequently it has been reported that, in regard to this query regarding the production of leaflets relating to the overnight parking of motorhomes or wild camping, the ENPA was aware that there had been some debate about this issue and various ideas suggested. In the short term ENPA have updated the information on its website which is available via the link below.  
<http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/where-to-stay/wild-camping-and-camper-vans>

## **10 Parish Lengthsman Scheme Update**

- 10.1 The representative from Dulverton Town Council confirmed that the project was running smoothly although payment was still awaited from Timberscombe Parish Council. It was acknowledged that Timberscombe currently did not have a Clerk and so it was suggested that Dulverton Town Council should make contact with the Chairman of Timberscombe Parish Council direct to resolve this matter.

## **11 Items brought forward by Parishes**

- 11.1 Representatives of Cutcombe Parish Council made further reference to the fact that the long awaited CCTV camera scheme at Wheddon Cross had now been successfully implemented. It was proposed to hold an official opening at a date to be confirmed.
- 11.2 The representatives were very pleased with the clarity of the cameras which had already proved a success in identifying a lorry that had caused damage to a property.
- 11.3 There were, however, going to be ongoing costs to ensure that the camera scheme could run properly and the parish council were proposing to set up a fund to assist meeting such costs and encouraged other surrounding parishes who would benefit from the scheme to consider making a contribution. Any such parish should contact the Cutcombe Parish Council Clerk to make their pledges of support.
- 11.4 The Chairman of Exford Parish Council stated that his council would provide a pledge of support and urged other parish councils to do the same.
- 11.5 It was suggested that Cutcombe Parish Council may wish to contact the existing CCTV volunteers group that existed – contact Stuart Lawrence – as they may be able to provide people to support the Cutcombe scheme.
- 11.6 The Exford Parish Council representative reported that the Somerset Association of Local Councils was proposing to set up a locum arrangement to assist councils who needed temporary cover for the parish clerk role. It was also intended to set up a mentoring scheme for parishes.
- 11.7 Councillor Karen Mills reported that the broadband airband project for Dartmoor and Exmoor was progressing; it had been delayed due to weather although it was still hoped that the project will be completed by the end of 2016.
- 11.8 Councillor Mills also advised the Panel that an initiative coordinated by Dr Nigel Stone of the Exmoor National Park Authority had been set up to prepare a business plan to try and ensure that the West Somerset College Farm premises remained open for the continued educational benefit for the young people of the area. She felt that this was a good example of coordinated partnership working which was a good model for the future.

## **10 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings**

- 6 September 2016 – 6.30 pm for Highway Warden's meeting followed by the main meeting commencing at 7.30 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford

- 8 November 2016 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 17 January 2017 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 2 March 2017 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm