

## Minehead Area Panel

### Notes of meeting held on 11 March 2015 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe, Minehead

#### Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Resident
Penny James	Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset Council
Cllr Maureen Smith	West Somerset Council & Transition Minehead & Alcombe
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council
Cllr David Sanders	West Somerset Council
Cllr Doug Ross	West Somerset Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council & Exmoor National Park Authority (part of meeting)
Cllr Terry Venner	Somerset County Council
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
Sue Sanders	Minehead Town Council
Teresa Bridgeman	West Somerset Flood Group
Brenda Maitland-Walker	West Somerset Flood Group
Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew	District Flood Board/West Somerset Council
Andy Lewis	Labour Party
Andrew McCausland	Minehead Baptist Church
Jerry Burge	Minehead & District Social Club
John Vicary	Resident
Diane Partridge	Resident
Colin Isherwood	Resident
Cath Isherwood	Resident
David Chave	Resident
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Diane Bowen (Butlins) and Cllr Roger Thomas (Minehead Town Council).

#### **2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns**

A number of issues had been received for Have Your Say, as follows:

- (a) *Sandra reported that Pete Bird had asked for his e-petition on the reinstatement of the Dunster cobbles to be raised at the meeting. Pete was asking for the Government to step in and stop the destruction of the cobbled pavements in Dunster. He felt that the cobbles should be returned to their rightful place to prevent Dunster losing some of its history and character. He had written to the Queen with his concerns and received a reply to say that his letter had been sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The petition could be found at: <http://petitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/73807>*

David Peake advised that the removal of the cobbles by Somerset County Council had been done with the agreement of Dunster Parish Council, as a Small Improvement Scheme. The argument was with the choice of replacement slabs and the County Council and Parish Council were in discussions over this issue.

Doug Ross asked whether the same materials and design as the slabs in High Street could be used. David explained that the two schemes had been different. The first (High Street) was a heritage scheme, funded by LARC, and it had been decided to purchase non-local stone for the works. The second scheme (West Street) had been funded by Somerset County Council and conservation advice had been sought which had recommended the use of local stone, which had been used.

*(b) A resident stated that he would like to see a Speed Indicator Device (SID) in the shopping area of Alcombe.*

Sue Sanders and David Peake advised him to put his request in writing to Minehead Town Council who would pass the request to Dave Grabham at Somerset County Council (SCC) for a slot in the Minehead SID rota. Sue warned that there was a long waiting list.

**ACTION: A request to be made to Minehead Town Council for a SID to be installed in the shopping area of Alcombe. Minehead Town Council to forward this to Dave Grabham at SCC.**

### **3. West Somerset Flood Group – by Teresa Bridgeman, Secretary of WSFG**

Teresa Bridgeman introduced herself. She was a Parish Councillor for Old Cleeve, Secretary of the West Somerset Flood Group (WSFG) and Vice-Chair of the District Flood Board. WSFG represented Town and Parish Councils on the Flood Board and had managed to have a voice at County level. Nearly half the pot of money available for drainage schemes had been obtained by the District. There were three councillors on WSFG – Brenda Maitland-Walker (Carhampton Parish Council), Robert MacDonald (Williton Parish Council) and Teresa.

Minehead was a significant member of WSFG having two-thirds of the population of West Somerset and suffering from flooding due to coastal, critical water courses and surface water. (Only doesn't suffer from ground water flooding.) Also there were rhynes in the Dunster Marsh area. Somerset County Council had commissioned a Surface Water Management Plan for Minehead which had been published in 2010/11. West Somerset Council, Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and Somerset County Council had all been involved in this Plan. However, it had not been taken into account in the Local Plan, only referred to. Teresa had raised this with Tim Burton, the Assistant Director of Planning and Environment. She felt the Management Plan should be used in the determination of proposed housing developments, such as those on land at Hopcott Road.

Somerset County Council had been a key player in securing funding for works at Blue Anchor, Ellicombe Cross and the Manor Road/Staunton Lane area.

The following organisations had responsibilities for waterways: SCC Highways checked culverts, The Environment Agency checked rivers, the Internal Drainage Board checked rhynes and West Somerset Council checked Council owned rhynes and the coast.

Minehead needed to work towards a flood management plan for the town and have a greater overview/oversight of the problem areas within the town, flood prevention measures and what was needed to be done at a time of flooding. Those people who were at risk, were vulnerable and needed help should be identified and groups of volunteers were required who were willing to assist elderly/disabled neighbours, etc. Such a plan needed to be owned by Minehead Town and District Councillors. The work on the plan needed to be divided up but it should be put together centrally and

Sue Sanders had already started this process. Such a document could also be used to obtain future funding.

Sue advised that the District Council had an emergency flood plan for the District, which included a section on evacuation procedures, etc. in Minehead. She felt that it would be useful to see this document so that it could be used as a possible starting point for the Minehead flood management plan.

*Following the meeting Sue was provided with the contact details of the post-holder at West Somerset Council (and Taunton Deane Borough Council) responsible for civil contingencies.*

Riperian ownership was discussed and it was emphasised that those people who owned sections of rivers had a responsibility to maintain their waterway. The Environment Agency had produced a guide entitled 'Living on the Edge: A guide to your rights and responsibilities of riverside ownership'. Sue Sanders had a few copies at the Town Hall or it could be downloaded from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/403435/LIT\\_7114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/403435/LIT_7114.pdf) The Environment Agency were in talks with the Land Registry regarding the latter giving the guide out and the meeting felt that solicitors should give out the guide where relevant to new land/house buyers.

Mandy Chilcott pointed out that as no-one knew exactly who owned what it was difficult to ensure that all waterways in Minehead were maintained. A resident advised that Minehead Urban District Council used to be the responsible body, but of course, this all changed with Local Government reorganisation in 1974 and now a number of organisations/individuals were involved. Teresa stated that there was also the problem that generally people didn't report flooding incidents so official data on flooding issues was sparse; whereas the collection of local knowledge by local people tended to be more successful.

A resident reported that 50% of the gullies in Minehead were blocked and needed to be looked at. It was easy when laying out parking areas to erroneously cover over the gullies.

#### **4. District Flood Board – by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew, West Somerset Lead Member for the Environment – General**

Cllr Trollope-Bellew explained that the District Flood Board comprised West Somerset Council, Somerset County Council, Exmoor National Park Authority, The Environment Agency, Wessex Water, the local Internal Drainage Board and the West Somerset Flood Group. The Board's role was to co-ordinate and communicate between the Parish/Town Councils and other organisations and to act as a conduit for funding, either by applying directly or by providing assistance with an application. This was the first District Flood Board in the County.

Two meetings of the Board had been held to date. The second meeting had concentrated on the role of the Board and WSFG and local flood management publications in relation to the Local Plan.

Flood plans were to be done by the Town and Parish Councils rather than the Board as they knew the unique problems of flooding in their own areas.

Doug Ross felt that there were problems with not knowing the owners of all the waterways in Minehead and that such data should be collected by West Somerset Council as there were more resources available than at Parish/Town Council level. Anthony reiterated the thoughts of the Board and WSFG in that the parishes were more aware of local issues/knowledge.

Flooding issues in relation to planning applications were soon to be the domain of Somerset County Council particularly with the introduction of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). However, this new system needed to be tried and tested. Teresa advised that Anthony Trollope-Bellew and Brenda Maitland-Walker would soon be meeting with Wessex Water on the need for such organisations to be fully aware of the pipe networks within the District and to be able to give full and comprehensive comments on planning applications. For instance it was of concern that Wessex Water were not aware of how many dwellings in Minehead had combined surface water/sewer water pipes.

Sandra thanked Teresa and Anthony for their interesting and informative talks, which had enabled a useful and lively discussion.

## **5. County Council Update**

Terry Venner reported that the proposed Alcombe/Ellicombe crossing for Bircham Road had been approved by SCC as a top five priority and it had been discussed and agreed as a good scheme by the West Somerset College Governors. The exact siting and type of crossing were to be decided so that the WSC's Planning Obligations Group could consider an application for Section 106 (planning obligations) funding of £100,000. Christine Lawrence would be meeting with Angela Summers (Communities Officer with West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council) regarding what was required for an application. Terry was invited to attend too.

Mandy Chilcott expressed concern with the number of A boards creeping out on to The Parade and The Avenue in Minehead. David Peake advised that in the past highways officers had received abuse and negative publicity when trying to control the use of A boards and needed the support of the community in order to continue to control their use. Dave Sanders advised that the incorrect siting of boards was a health and safety issue, and that some were being put beneath and next to the West Somerset signs.

Terry asked the public to report those A boards that needed to be removed to him and he would advise David accordingly.

**ACTION: Members of the public to report A boards that were health and safety hazards to Cllr Terry Venner who would advise David Peake accordingly.**

When Christine Lawrence arrived at the meeting, she reported that there had been a review of the mobile library service in Somerset. In Minehead the mobile stop at Cheeky Cherubs was to be retained and the Butlins stop was to be withdrawn.

In addition, the new doctor's surgery in Dunster was coming along well.

## **6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2014**

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

### **Matters Arising**

*Item 2 – David Peake to arrange for the Traffic Regulation Order for Watery Lane (specifically near St Michael's School) to be looked into regarding lines and signage:* David reported that the Traffic Regulation Order stated that there was no parking between 8am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday. On the ground there were single

yellow lines and a sign/plate annotated with 8am to 6pm parking Monday to Saturday. The Order and the signage were therefore in agreement that Sunday parking was allowed.

A resident asked why traffic wardens were patrolling on Sundays especially as they would be paid time and a half or double time on this day. David advised that nowadays there were more parking restrictions on a Sunday as more retail stores were open, there were church services and the roads were busier than historically, so more control was required. Mandy Chilcott further explained that Somerset County Council were contracted for so many hours per month, which could include any day including Sundays so wardens were not paid more to work on Sundays. SCC also managed the car park next to the West Somerset Railway. Terry Venner thought that there should be free parking on a Sunday.

## **7. Minehead Vision Group – an update**

A report had been prepared by Gordon Dyer, Economic Development Officer with West Somerset Council, which Sandra read out, as follows:

- Minehead Vision Group (MVG) would be holding a drop-in event (likely to be from 3pm on 19 March at the Beach Hotel). The event was to celebrate all that had been achieved by the Group over the past two years. A report would also be produced providing detail of over 40 projects which had taken place.
- MVG continued to have a regular oversight of the work of the Vision Manager, however, the Vision Manager post and apprentice post would finish at the end of March 2015. The Group was keen to look at a refresh of the overall Vision in 2015.
- The Group regularly received updates from Minehead Development Trust, Minehead Events Group and the Minehead Information Centre and had been supportive of the Chamber of Trade's bid to secure Morrisons' S106 funding for The Avenue Tree Lights Scheme.

## **8. Minehead Development Trust – an update**

There was no report available.

## **9. Police Report**

There was no report available.

## **10. Highway Matters**

David Peake reported the following:

### **Completed Highway Works:**

Construction of concrete channel at the top end of Staunton Lane, Alcombe.  
Installation of pedestrian handrail at Hopcott Close, Minehead  
Relaying kerbs and carriageway patching on Porlock Road, Minehead

### **Ongoing Highway Works:**

Drainage works at Ellicombe Cross, Alcombe, with a temporary road closure from 9 to 20 March.

Kerbing and drainage repairs at Hayfield Road, Minehead from 9 to 16 March.

Water main renewal, footway improvements, traffic signal system upgrading, electricity supply upgrade, telephone duct work, highway works in relation to new

doctor's surgery and carriageway resurfacing on the A396 at West Street and Church Street in Dunster, with a temporary road closure from 5 January to 31 March 2015. This work was on schedule.

**Future Highway Works:**

Carriageway resurfacing at Hayfield Road, Minehead, with a temporary road closure from 24 to 27 March.

**Other Highway works:**

*Manor Road, Alcombe*

Phase 1 – vegetation clearance carried out in March 2014.

Phase 2 – silt removal from pond upstream of bridge, installation of new trash screen on bridge and installation of new trash screen on mouth of first culvert downstream of bridge. Work carried out January/February 2015.

*A39/B3190 Washford Cross*

Construction of new roundabout. Works commenced in early January and good progress had been made. The plan was to re-open the roads for the Summer holidays, returning again in September (with the diversions back in place) to complete the job before Christmas 2015.

Traffic lights were currently in place from 9.30am to 3.30pm whilst the road was being widened.

The four or five 'Big Weekends' (closure of the B3190 south of the junction from 7pm on Fridays to 7am on Mondays) would take place from June 2015 onwards. These would be advertised nearer the time.

Mandy Chilcott stated that when the traffic lights were in place earlier in the week there was a tailback of traffic to Dunster, yet very little in the opposite direction. David Peake advised that problems with traffic flow should be reported to Somerset County Council Highways on tel: 0845 345 9155.

A resident reported that there was a garage fire in Williton recently which had led to traffic chaos and, in the absence of a police officer, a resident had come forward and directed/co-ordinated the traffic.

Andrew McCausland reported that he lived close to the route to Wootton Courtney, which had turned into the unofficial diversion/rat run whilst the A396 was closed through Dunster, but problems had been encountered with the narrow roads and amount of traffic. Andrew wondered whether it could be used as a one-way route. David Peake explained that only roads of a similar size to the closed road were used as diversionary routes. The road through Wootton Courtney could not therefore be an official diversion, and repair work on the road would be undertaken once the A396 had been re-opened.

A resident asked whether the Manor Road stream would have a permanent maintenance scheme to keep the water clear of vegetation and debris. David advised that this was not a highway issue. It could be looked at by the West Somerset Flood Group and the Flood and Water Management Team at Somerset County Council could get involved, but maintenance probably came down to money unless the work was done by volunteers.

David Sanders pointed out that Glenmore Road was getting very busy with traffic passing and parking, including articulated vehicles. He wondered whether a residents parking permit scheme could be implemented. It was agreed that this should be the subject of discussion at a future Minehead Area Panel meeting.

**ACTION: Residents Parking schemes to be discussed at a future meeting. David Peake to provide Sarah with the names of Somerset County Council officers who should be invited to speak.**

Doug Ross expressed concern about debris regularly falling from the banks onto Holloway Street. David Peake informed that there were four different landowners and work needed to be undertaken by each of them to prevent a repeat of the landslide last year, which had been caused by tree removal and very wet weather, and had closed the road for some time. Unfortunately, the landowners could not be made to do the works required. Highways continued to keep an eye on the road. It was noted that the debris that fell on the road last year was compressed sand, not actual rock.

#### **11. Burning Issues**

There was no report available.

#### **12. Town Council Update**

Sue Sanders reported the following:

- The Town Council were looking at setting a budget which would result in the least increase to the tax payer (approximately 2%). This increase was due to West Somerset Council not passing on the Council Tax Support Grant to the Town and Parish Councils this year which would have amounted to £41,000 for Minehead.
- With regards to the flowerbed on the bend between Gladstone Terrace and Alcombe Road, David Peake and Lynch's had been spoken to and the vegetation and wall were to be removed and the area tarmacked leaving space for two cherry trees and the bench.

#### **13. District Council Update**

Penny James reported the following:

##### **Public Conveniences**

The public conveniences in Blenheim Gardens and the ladies and gents facilities at The Carousel on Warren Road would be re-opening for the Summer on Monday, 30 March 2015.

##### **Blenheim Gardens**

Works were taking place to carry out some repairs on the public conveniences before they were re-opened, including repairs to the roof and guttering. Repairs were to be carried out on the flat felt roof of the café. Trees had been cut back from around the public conveniences and the café.

##### **Minehead Seafront Sand Clearance**

Sand clearance would be commencing on 16 March 2015 to clear the car parks, roadside, paths, the emergency exit on the beach and the pedestrian steps at the far end of the car park. These preliminary works would be carried out by the Open Spaces team of West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council.

On 23 March 2015 Glanville Environmental would start to clear the gullies and the main drains of sand and debris. This would take approximately five days. The work would be overseen by the Property Services team of West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council.

### **Dredging – Minehead Harbour**

Prices were being obtained for the removal of the shingle ridge at Minehead Harbour.

### **Lagoon Area**

The Grounds Maintenance team were to dig out a trench to try and improve the water flow. To date this had not been possible due to the access land being so wet. The work was scheduled for 12 March 2015.

### **Budget**

West Somerset Council were to set a balanced budget for 2015/16.

## **14. Any Other Business**

### **Non-attractive Roundabouts**

A resident asked when the roundabouts in Minehead would be improved and why the flower beds at Jubilee Gardens/The Hobby Horse had been grassed over.

Sue Sanders replied that the roundabout at Culvercliffe had been sown with wildflowers; the roundabout at the golf course had rocks in it so the Golf Club were no longer interested in sponsoring it, conifers were to be planted on the Ellicombe roundabout and Derek Merson was to sponsor the roundabout at Butlins. Sadly no other businesses had agreed to sponsor the presentation of the roundabouts. The flower beds at Jubilee Gardens/The Hobby Horse had been grassed over by West Somerset Council.

David Peake advised that the roundabouts by Morrisons were under the control of the developer as they had not been adopted.

Maureen Smith advised that the new roundabout at Washford Cross was to be planted with sedum.

### **Blenheim Gardens**

A resident reported that he had seen people with cans of alcohol in Blenheim Gardens on the afternoon of 10 March. As Blenheim Gardens was an Alcohol Designation Zone, Mandy Chilcott said that she would approach the Police and ask them to patrol the Gardens.

**ACTION: Mandy Chilcott to talk to the Police regarding patrolling Blenheim Gardens.**

## **15. Date & Venue of Future Meetings**

### **Future meetings to be held on:**

Wednesday, 10 June 2015 at 6.30pm – The Committee Room (behind the Hall), The Lawns, Townsend Road, Minehead

Wednesday, 9 September 2015 at 6.30pm – The Avenue Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead

Wednesday, 9 December 2015 at 6.30pm – The Avenue Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead

Wednesday, 9 March 2016 at 6.30pm – Venue to be confirmed.