

## Minehead Area Panel

### Notes of meeting held on 12 March 2014 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Minehead

#### Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Member of the Public
Dave Jackson	YMCA Somerset Coast
Adrian Dyer	West Somerset Council
James Barra	Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset Council
Cllr Maureen Smith	West Somerset Council/ Transition Minehead & Alcombe
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Doug Ross	West Somerset Council
Cllr David Sanders	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council
Cllr Gail Everett	Minehead Town Council
Sue Sanders	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Cllr Terry Venner	Somerset County Council
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
Chris Jones	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
John Clyde-Smith	Minehead Tourism & Business Association
Alan Radford	Resident
Diana Geneen Oswald	Resident
Dave Voisey	Resident
David Chase	Resident
Paul Ramsey-Read	Elliott Hyde Ltd
Anne Clarke	Manor Road/Staunton Lane Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Karen Jones	Resident
John Vicary	Resident
Colin Isherwood	Resident
Brenda Maitland-Walker	Resident (part of meeting)
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

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

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), John Watkins, Pat Watkins, Cllr Ron Bridle (Minehead Town Council), Cllr Paul Grierson (Minehead Town Council/West Somerset Council), Cllr Marcus Kravis (Minehead Town Council), Cllr Val Welch (Minehead Town Council), Cllr Roger Thomas (Minehead Town Council), Cllr Richard Lillis (West Somerset Council), Graham Sizer (Minehead Development Trust/Minehead Chamber of Commerce).

#### **2. Election of Chair**

Adrian took the Chair for this item. There were no nominations from the floor and Sandra stated her willingness to stand for re-election. Doug Ross proposed and Terry Venner seconded that Sandra be elected as Chair for the next 12 months. All present were in favour and Sandra was duly elected.

Adrian advised that he would be leaving West Somerset Council on 31 March so this would be his last Minehead Area Panel meeting. He thanked Sandra for her sterling work in chairing the Panel meetings and ensuring that the meeting always ended promptly at 8pm! Adrian presented Sandra with a bouquet of flowers. He then left the meeting.

### **3. Presentation by Dave Jackson of YMCA Somerset Coast**

Due to illness Martin Hodgson was not able to attend the meeting and Dave Jackson had been asked to talk to the Panel on Martin's behalf. Dave explained that the YMCA was no longer just YMCA Bridgwater and had extended to North Somerset and into Bath and North East Somerset and had been in West Somerset for over a year. It had therefore been renamed as YMCA Somerset Coast.

Dave then reported on the YMCA project at the Beach Hotel. This was an exciting time for the Association and the first time that they had run a hotel. It comprised supported housing, one and two bed flats, cluster rooms with shared kitchen, etc. It catered for Level 3 homeless in that everyone was in employment or training or looking to go down these routes. The Beach Hotel had been running as a supported housing facility for seven youngsters for a number of months already, and four of the youngsters were doing apprenticeships. The YMCA had also taken over Lambrook House on Tregonwell Road from Stonham Housing about 18 months to two years ago and this provided level 2/3 supported housing.

Steamers Bar no longer existed and in its place the Minehead Information Centre would open on 22 March 2014 with the Minehead Museum opening on 29 March 2014.

At the Beach Hotel further facilities would be coming on board - flexible accommodation for backpackers, groups, businessmen, students, etc. At the front of the hotel there were 13 luxury suites costing £120-£130 per room per night. These rooms were on the top floors and provided beautiful views of the sea. In addition, there would be a high quality restaurant, using locally sourced food, run by apprentices.

David Sanders mentioned that people had been seen trying to enter the property by climbing over the walls at the back. Dave replied that concierge time had now increased to 24/7 so this should no longer be possible.

Dave further explained that young people were trained on how to organise their finances, keep budgets, etc. and a how to cook training programme was being put on at the Culbone Inn. All accredited schemes were run through West Somerset College.

Mandy Chilcott felt that it was essential for young people to be encouraged to participate in local events in the town, and advised the meeting that an Irish company were coming over to build a Currach with the help of local unemployed people.

There was an off-shoot discussion by the meeting on why the Minehead Information Centre was not called Tourist Information Centre and that regardless of any affiliation, it should be called a TIC as generally people knew and recognised the TIC brand. On the subject of branding Dave Jackson stated that the YMCA would be using simple branding such as an 'i' for Minehead Information Centre and an 'm' for museum.

It was noted that the Beach Hotel did not intend to become DDA compliant and accommodate disabled people.

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

A number of issues were raised as follows:

- (a) *John Vicary asked for an update on the provision of high speed fibre broadband for Minehead*

Christine Lawrence reported that 95% of Somerset would be covered by Broadband within the published timescale It would reach Minehead but it may not reach smaller villages/hamlets on Exmoor, for instance. David Peake advised that the Broadband roll-out programme was progressing from Taunton. The infrastructure of fibre cabling had been installed on arterial routes and as at the end of December had covered Cross Keys to Williton. There were cabinets at Combe Florey, Nether Stowey and Bishops Lydeard. There was no news yet on the roll-out along the A39, but he could advise that Minehead was on line to receive Broadband.

Andrew Hadley further added that BT were evaluating exchanges to see if they could receive fibre optics, and would not publish publicly when Broadband would be coming to that exchange until they were absolutely sure it was going to happen.

Sandra advised that Corinne Matthews, Regeneration and Tourism Manager with West Somerset Council, had provided the following in response to John's request for an update, which reinforced the above, as follows:

The latest information relating to progress on the Connecting Devon and Somerset Project is provided on the following website: <http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/where-and-when/> On this website it states that further planning and survey will be undertaken, which means that Minehead is certainly in line to receive fibre optic. The work tends to emanate from the largest towns – so currently those communities closest to say Taunton and Exeter are included within the earlier stages – but it is certainly on its way. We are unable to provide accurate timescales at the moment, as we simply don't know.

- (b) *John Vicary asked what action could be taken to ensure the pavement outside West Somerset College was safe and walkable and not flooded in times of heavy rain.*

Christine advised that she had looked at the drains with the College staff to find out if they were fit for purpose. A senior officer with the Highways department had inspected the site and was preparing a report. There was the need to monitor the situation at the College, and also at Alcombe Combe, to make sure that the College were doing all they could to ensure their drains were fully functional. The removal of large trees close to residential dwellings was also being looked at.

David Peake reported that he had found out where the pipe went: from Brook Street through the College grounds to The Shires to Ellicombe roundabout and to the rheims on the eastern part of the roundabout. All the Highways sections had been checked and were fine, but much of the pipe was under other peoples' land so more investigation was required. West Somerset College had done much on their grounds.

David Chase thanked Somerset County Highways for doing all the work by the brook in Alcombe.

- (c) *John Clyde-Smith requested an update on what had happened since last Summer when Minehead Association of Business and Tourism met with County Councillor Harvey Siggs with regard to changing the speed limit on the seafront to 10mph and turning the road into a single lane with one-way traffic. The unused lane to be used for diagonal parking for 200 cars and the seafront to be used for markets and entertainment throughout the summer and thus be more 'tourist friendly'.*

The councillors advised that there was the need to go through the proper process, ie, through Minehead Town Council, who would write to County Highways for finance, costings etc. to be looked at. It was also essential to consult widely with Minehead people to ascertain their views. Traffic flow would need to be considered carefully as a one-way system would take more traffic through the town and perhaps the industrial estate. Bus journeys too would be diverted through the town centre and residential areas, perhaps to the inconvenience of residents.

Doug Ross was sympathetic with the proposal to reduce the speed limit along the seafront. He had expressed a wish to see it reduced to 20mph in the past. However, he added that other councillors had promoted the idea of one-way system before and had met with opposition from businesses.

Mandy advised that a one-way system did not necessarily increase trade as people couldn't easily go back to look at businesses that have attracted them. Other towns had gone down the tourist friendly route but it had taken them many years to achieve.

Gail Everett also felt that the drains needed to be sorted out on the seafront as the drains got choked with sand and then caused floods.

Maureen Smith and Andrew Hadley informed the meeting that the idea of a shared space within Minehead centre/seafront was also being looked at and there needed to be a consensus of opinion on what would work best.

Finally, Sandra explained that Minehead Area Panel was not a decision making body and could only act as a forum for bringing together people in the know.

- (d) *Anne Clarke raised the following issues, on behalf of Residents of Manor Road and Staunton Lane, which were looked at individually, as follows:*

(e)

- a. *To request a larger 5 mile per hour sign at the entrance to Alcombe Combe.*

Sue Sanders advised that Minehead Town Council could arrange for a larger sign. The request would need to be considered by the Council's General Purposes and Amenities Committee.

- b. *To highlight traffic travelling at speed into and out of Alcombe Combe – construction vehicles, skip lorries, to and from Long Combe Lodge, parcel delivery vehicles, post office vans.*

Sue advised that it was difficult to regulate the traffic travelling into and out of the Combe. The results of the Speed Indicator Device last year had shown a median speed of 18/19 mph and an 85%ile speed of 23mph, which did not meet the criteria (36mph in a 30mph speed limit) for the area to be included in the County Council's SID programme. Anne felt the SID had been put in the wrong place, however, Sue advised that Somerset County Council determined the location of SIDs.

- c. *To request action on providing a sleeping policeman at the entrance to Alcombe Combe.*

Sue informed that considerable consultation was required for such a proposal and it would take a long time.

- d. *To request action to channel the rainwater which runs down Staunton Lane and floods properties at the bottom.*

David Peake explained that funding had been provided by the Flood and Water Management team of Somerset County Council to clear the vegetation from the top/upper side of Staunton Lane and the vegetation on the downside of Staunton Lane, and this work was progressing. An application for funding of phase two of the works would be submitted to the Flood and Water Management section's 2014/15 budget. The works in phase two would comprise full clearing out of the upper part of Staunton Lane crossing and building grillages on the upper and downside.

- (f) *An informal issue had been raised regarding car headlights being reflected back towards the driver from the mirrored screening of Costa's window when driving down Friday Street towards Wellington Square.*

Sandra stated that she had wished to raise this with a police officer, but unfortunately there was no police presence at the meeting. She asked if anyone at the meeting had encountered any problems, but no-one was aware of the issue.

## 5. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2013**

### **Matters of Accuracy**

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

### **Matters Arising**

*Item 10 – Seafront Lighting:* David Sanders advised that there were 67 lights on the seafront. Of these about 18 months ago only 12 were working. Six months ago 12 were not working and as of 10 March only one was not working.

## 6. **County Council Update**

Christine Lawrence passed a copy of 'The Somerset Levels and Moors Flood Action Plan' Executive Summary to the Chair and asked that it be circulated with the minutes of the meeting (please see 'attached'). Christine also advised that small amounts of funding of about £250 were available from the Somerset Community Foundation for the purchase of replacement furniture and the like.

Cllr Lawrence reported that Callins Wood had been sold by Somerset County Council but the existing rights of way on the land would remain. She had attended the Minehead Asset Opportunity workshop at the Beach Hotel on 25 February run by Minehead Development Trust and Somerset County Council and had found it very useful.

The meeting were advised by Doug Ross that the Minor Injuries Unit at Minehead Hospital was not open from 11pm to 7am due to a shortage of four senior degree nurses. This was supposed to be a temporary state of affairs but the fear was that it would become permanent over time. Demand was low at the moment but that this

would probably increase over the summer months with the influx of visitors. The advice at the moment was to ring 111.

The meeting noted that the unavailability of the x-ray department was also causing problems. Gail Everett who works in the MIU advised that very few people were using the facility and that consultants would not come out to Minehead.

Doug requested that people write to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and felt that the CCG should be invited to a future meeting of the Panel. Councillors wished to see the Panel representing Minehead on the West Somerset Health Forum, which was run by the CCG and met four times per annum, and thought that Sandra should write to the CCG to this end.

The out-of-hours service was then discussed and Mandy Chilcott advised that reaching Minehead for an out-of-hours GP meant travelling beyond the nationally recognised times for an out-of-hours visit. She felt that an out-of-hours post needed to be based at Minehead hospital.

Sandra reminded the Panel that Medical Emergency Cover in West Somerset had been discussed at the meeting of the Minehead Area Panel in September 2012 with representatives from the Minor Injury Unit Service, Somerset GP Out of Hours Service and Clinical Commissioning Group. The meeting had been extremely well attended.

Terry Venner advised that a meeting had been held in February regarding public bus services and a new agreement between Somerset County Council and the bus operators would be in place from 1 April 2014 which would save the 100, 101 and 106 services. There would be amendments to the timetables in due course. Over 200 people had signed a petition in Minehead, and many more had completed the online survey.

Terry also reported the following:

- 55 local residential parking permits were being looked at in Minehead.
- Each County Councillor had £5,000 to spend.
- The work on the footpath between Morrisons and the West Somerset Railway had started in January but the contractors had been required to undertake works on The Levels due to the flooding, so the work on the footpath had been put on hold and would recommence in 2 to 3 weeks time. It should be completed by the early Summer.
- With regard to the proposed sale of the railway line used by the West Somerset Railway and owned by Somerset County Council, Terry advised that Paul Conibeare, General Manager of the West Somerset Railway, was in discussions with David Huxtable. If the Panel wished an update could be obtained from Mr Huxtable.
- On 21 and 22 December Park Street and The Avenue had been flooded, following which the culvert in Parkhouse Road had been cleared every day for the next three weeks by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency would also be coming to Minehead in the Spring to discuss flooding issues.

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

A report had been prepared by Corinne Matthews, Regeneration & Tourism Manager with West Somerset Council, which Sandra read out, as follows:

A special meeting had been held on 4 February to consider potential projects that could utilise the remainder of the Morrisons S106 allocation, which was aimed at improving the links to the town from the supermarket. Some very good ideas were

put forward and the Minehead Vision Manager was working these up into a potential scheme to be further considered by the Visioning Group at their next meeting in March.

A recent study of Minehead had also been undertaken by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) into how resilient the town was. It was hoped that the findings of the report would feed into the refresh of the Minehead action plan. It should be noted that this study was undertaken at no cost, thanks to a successful bid made to CLES as part of the Portas initiative.

Mandy Chilcott advised that she was Chair of the Minehead Visioning Group and could provide additional information if required.

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

A report had been prepared by Jenny Lennon-Wood of the Minehead Development Trust, which Sandra read out, as follows:

Creating a community hub in the Old Hospital remains the principal aim of the Minehead Development Trust (MDT). With the aim of defining viable proposals for co-locating services in the hub, MDT ran a Minehead Asset Opportunity Workshop jointly with Somerset County Council on 25 February. This formed part of the Shared Community Assets for Somerset review, which aims to enhance quality and accessibility through the co-ordination of services. More than 30 representatives of public, voluntary and local authority service providers attended the workshop in the Beach Hotel. All were keen to work together to develop ideas for co-location, with customer-facing services like the Library and the Minehead Information Centre co-ordinated in the Old Hospital. Locality provided an independent chair and a facilitator for the workshop and will issue a full report, with recommendations, shortly.

MDT is also responsible for running the Minehead Information Centre which is now transferring to the new Beach Café, taking up an exciting opportunity to pilot partnership working with YMCA Somerset Coast and Minehead Museum. Also, to deliver the Minehead Visioning Group's action plan for regeneration, MDT employs the Minehead Vision Manager, Stephen Hooper. His work on the action plan includes a project to celebrate the town's maritime heritage with plaques, depicting historic vessels, on the harbour wall and, from 24 March the building of a curragh, culminating in the Harbour Festival in July. Also, his successful bid resulted in Minehead being one of nine towns in England to be selected for a Town Team Resilience Assessment. The assessors chose Minehead as their first town to visit. Their initial comments were very positive. They will provide a formal report in due course.

## **9. Police Report**

There was no report available.

## **10. Highway Matters**

David Peake reported that there had been many weather related events over the past three months, including landslips, fallen trees, records of rainfall, low pressure, tidal surges, and snow on Exmoor that had badly affected the highway network and led to closed and damaged roads. He thanked everyone involved in the work and the public for their patience.

### **Completed Highway Works:**

Footway works along Whitegate Road.

Footway resurfacing along Paganel Rise.

Embankment/verge repairs along Staunton Lane, Alcombe.

Repairs to slabbed footway on the south side of Friday Street between Wellington Square and Quirke Street.

Repairs to wall and carriageway and the fitting of a new grille on the mouth of the culvert in Brook Street, Alcombe.

Work to Alcombe Brook in Manor Road, Alcombe - Phase 1a funded by Somerset County Council Flood and Water Management

#### **Future Highway Works:**

Carriageway resurfacing along Hillview Close with a temporary road closure on 25 March.

Work to Alcombe Brook in Manor Road, Alcombe - Phase 1b funded by Somerset County Council Flood and Water Management - for one week in March.

Replacement of interceptor by Wessex Water in Holloway Street, with a temporary road closure between The Parade and Market House Lane, from 17 to 19 March inclusive.

Temporary reversal of one-way traffic flow along Market House Lane, in association with the above temporary road closure, from 17 to 19 March inclusive.

In addition, work to Alcombe Brook – Phase 2. A bid has been put into the Somerset County Council Flood and Water Management fund for works in 2014/2015.

David Sanders advised that the painting of the double yellow lines on part of Station Terrace and Glenmore Road had not been finished due to cars parking along the route. David said he would investigate.

**ACTION: David Peake to investigate the completion of the double yellows lines on part of Station Terrace and Glenmore Road.**

Cllr Sanders added that on the route along North Road to Blenheim Gardens the yellow lines had worn away. David Peake said he would investigate.

**ACTION: David Peake to investigate the state of the double yellows lines along North Road to Blenheim Gardens.**

## **11. Burning Issues**

Chris Jones of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) reported the following:

#### **Operational News**

- Minehead crews had attended over 42 operational calls during the last quarter, including six road traffic collisions, a large number of chimney fires, several smaller property fires and a large number of flood related calls during the last two weeks of December.
- There had not been any cases of deliberately ignited fires during the last quarter in the Minehead area.

#### **Community Safety News and Activities**

- Community safety teams continued the arson awareness sessions in both West Somerset College and Minehead Middle School.
- Community safety teams recently delivered three bespoke sessions and practical demonstrations of cooking oil related fires at the College. These were for pupils studying catering and hospitality, on a public service course and also for a small number of students with additional learning needs.
- A major community engagement event was due to start running from Minehead Fire Station next week with a programme called Phoenix Job Centre Plus. On this occasion the scheme would be funded jointly by West Somerset Council and

the Fire Service. It was a scheme whereby about 12 individuals on Job Seekers Allowance from the West Somerset area were given practical training in a Fire Service related environment and discipline. This aimed to help them learn new skills such as health and safety training, basic first aid at work, and health and hygiene, along with team building from the Fire Service's related training and drills. It effectively would help them become more employable, improve their CVs and quite often their morale and confidence.

After seven days of intensive training there would be a passing out parade to which local employers were invited along with various Council dignitaries and guests. They would see the parade plus demonstrations of all the skills learned.

Previous programmes had seen over 85% of those taking part achieve employment offers and secure jobs following the programme. On many occasions, some employers have offered jobs or interviews to some of those taking part based on the demonstrations and effort they witness at the parades. The event would be publicised in the local press when completed.

### **News and Public Information**

- Following the efficiency savings of the initial £5.5 million for 2013/14, the Fire Authority continued to look at the next rounds of savings for 2014/15, which would run in excess of £5 million. Indications were that savings were likely to continue up until 2018.
- Public information could be sought from the website: [www.dsfrs.gov.uk](http://www.dsfrs.gov.uk)

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

Sue Sanders reported the following:

- The Town Council had agreed a 0% increase in the precept.
- Christine Lawrence had given the Town Council £500 to fund a health and well-being gym on King George V playing field for 12 year olds to adults
- In conjunction with Angela Lamplough, Climate Change and Community Liaison Manager with West Somerset Council, the Town Council were looking at the provision of new play equipment for Culvercliffe.

Sandra advised that the swings on King George V playing field were in need of replacing. Sue stated that S106 funding could not be used for replacement swings.

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

James reported the following:

- The project to extend the existing CCTV system to cover the harbour area was nearing fruition and the public would soon be able to view live images of the harbour via the internet. Local businesses would also be offered the opportunity to advertise on this website.
- The public consultation exercise concerning the proposal to extend the Designated Public Place Orders in Minehead had concluded and a decision on this proposal would be taken at Full Council later this month.
- The lights on the seafront now all had 80 watt LED lights which were not as bright as the G12 lamps but should be less troublesome as they did not require switchgear. The old flex had been replaced with artic cable which was not so prone to damage in adverse weather conditions.
- As noted at the last meeting a new river intake grill would be installed on the culvert near Minehead hospital. An additional grill at the lower end of the site

has now also been ordered. These new grills would help to alleviate problems during bad weather. The first grill was due to be installed on 3 March.

- Trees had been lost at Minehead harbour, Molly's Patch, the seafront, Blenheim Gardens and The Parks. These had now all been removed by the Council's contractors.
- Sand removal was scheduled for the week commencing 7 April 2014 (one week before Easter) and an underspend would be carried over to ensure the sand would be removed in March 2015, again before Easter. Gail Everett asked for all steps down to the beach to be cleared. James noted her request.
- The Cuckoo Meadow playground equipment was owned by the District Council and was now old and in need of replacing. The Rural Youth Project had undertaken an exercise with the children and discovered the new outdoor play equipment they would like. Angela Lamplough was looking for grant funding.

#### **14. Any Other Business**

##### **Somerset Minerals Plan**

Sandra reported that Somerset County Council were consulting on their Minerals Plan from 3 March to 14 April and information sheets could be picked up before leaving the meeting.

##### **Lighting along footpath between WSR and Trinity Way**

Gail Everett reported that the street lights were not working and she understood that they were the responsibility of West Somerset Council. James said he would investigate.

**ACTION: Sarah/James to investigate ownership and the problem with the lights along the footpath.** *The footpath has been adopted by Somerset County Council. They are investigating the streetlights and will report back to Sarah.*

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

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

Wednesday, 11 June 2014 at Sainsbury Hall, Whitworth Road, Minehead

Wednesday, 10 September 2014 at The Avenue Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead.

Wednesday, 10 December 2014 at The Avenue Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead.

Wednesday, 11 March 2015 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Alcombe