

**EXMOOR PANEL  
MINUTES  
Tuesday 12 September 2017  
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

**Those present:**

S Pugsley (Chair)	J Anson, Cutcombe PC
V White, Cutcombe PC	J Davies, Cutcombe PC
G Lewis, Dulverton TC	N Thwaites, Dulverton TC and WSC
M Ellicott, Exford PC	D Lungley, Exton PC
H Harrington, Luccombe PC	D Powell, Luxborough PC
D Godsall, Winsford PC	B Flanagan, Winsford PC
J Bray, Winsford PC	T Howard, Withypool & Hawkridge PC
F Nicholson, SCC	K Harwood, SCC Highways
D Peake, SCC Highways	S Williams, Avon & Somerset Police
L Brooks, Avon & Somerset Police	B Lang, WSC
W Lock, Exmoor Young Voices	L Silverlock, Exmoor Young Voices
R Foxwell	

**1 Have your Say and Police Issues**

- 1.1 With the agreement of the Chairman the Have your Say and Police Issues items were held together.
- 1.2 Sergeant Stuart Williams introduced himself as the Neighbourhood Police Sergeant for Minehead and the whole surrounding area and stressed that he and his team would be focussing on preventing crime and looking after the vulnerable in the local community. He encouraged people to report crime at any level including poaching so that accurate figures would be known and appropriate action taken.
- 1.2 His colleague, PCSO Linda Brooks, reported that the area had a relatively low crime rate of approximately 10 per month, although there were occasional spikes in such matters as break-ins to outside sheds.
- 1.4 In response to a question as to whether Minehead Police Station was going to close, it was confirmed that the Police Station in Minehead was due to be re-sited within the town although no location had been agreed upon as yet. It was also confirmed that the Police used airwave communications in the Exmoor area and were linked into the Police Headquarters at Bristol and were therefore able to call for assistance without delay.
- 1.5 It was confirmed that additional police presence would be provided when the badger cull recommenced in the West Somerset area.
- 1.6 In response to a question from the Exford Parish Council, PC Brooks agreed to liaise with Councillor Mike Ellicott to explore setting up a Communities Speedwatch Group for the parish.
- 1.7 In response to a query as to what the legal position was if 30 mph road signs at the edges of a village got covered with foliage – would this provide defence for speeding drivers, the Highways representatives agreed to arrange for a briefing paper on this matter to be produced for circulation to all parishes in the Exmoor area.

- 1.8 Withypool Parish Council were interested in the introduction of some speeding limits in their village and it was explained that it is quite difficult without street lighting and without a speed limit the Police could only address reported examples of 'dangerous driving'.
- 1.9 The Chairman thanked the Police representatives for their attendance.

**Addendum** The following response was received from the County Highways Traffic Engineer in regard to paragraph 1.7 above:

Any terminal or repeater speed limit signs that is obscured and reported to us are dealt with by the area superintendents who put the job through on their PDA as a 24 hour priority. The police also report this issue to us and it is dealt with in the same manner. The new TSRGD 2016 relaxes many previous requirements on the use and placing of signs:

- Where previously two terminal signs were needed to show the start of a traffic restriction, only one is now required, regardless of the width of the road, to be compliant.
- Fewer signs now have a statutory requirement that they be lit. For those where direct lighting is not mandatory and an authority judges that lighting is no longer needed, signs will be less intrusive, as well as reducing energy usage and light pollution.
- The requirement to place repeater signs has been removed. It is for local authorities to make sure that restrictions such as speed limits are signed so that drivers know, and are regularly reminded of, the restriction in place.

## **2 Apologies for Absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from C Knight (Brushford PC), M Rawle (Dulverton PC), R Hall (Porlock PC), A Vigars (Exmoor PC), P Webber (Selworthy and Minehead Without PC), R Manicom and P Collings (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service), R McArthur (ENPA), K Mills (WSC) and B Heywood (WSC).
- 2.2 Apologies were also provided from M Taylor and M Webber of Exmoor Young Voices.

## **3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2017 and Matters Arising**

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

- 3.2 Matters arising:

5 Somerset West Lottery – Bruce Lang reported that the Somerset West Lottery was progressing well and raising funds for good local causes.

11.2 Signpost Officer – the Chairman reported that the Signpost Officer had been unable to attend this meeting but hoped to attend a future meeting of the Panel.

## **4 Exmoor Young Voices**

- 4.1 William Lock, Chairman of Exmoor Young Voices, attended the meeting supported by Les Silverlock.
- 4.2 William explained that the organisation had been established with the support of Exmoor National Park and promoted the needs of Exmoor young people both locally

and nationally including lobbying Her Majesty's Government. The Group seeks local solutions for local problems.

- 4.3 In order to gain momentum, funding had been gained to recruit a part-time coordinator and parishes were encouraged to support this initiative through making financial contributions and/or putting forward young people from their parishes to participate in the organisation.
- 4.4 Briefing papers relating to the organisation are attached at Appendix A to the notes of this meeting.
- 4.5 The Chairman suggested that the organisation be invited to attend a meeting of the West Somerset Council's Corporate Policy Advisory Group and it was agreed that details of future meetings would be sent to William to see if this could be arranged.
- 4.6 The Chairman thanked William and Les for their attendance.

## **5 Housing Needs Survey**

- 5.1 Sue Southwell, Rural Housing Enabler, sent her apologies and a briefing note relating to housing needs surveys on Exmoor was circulated and is attached as Appendix B to the notes of this meeting.
- 5.2 The Chairman suggested that Sue Southwell be invited to the next meeting along with a representative from Magna so there could be a proper focus on rural housing issues.
- 5.3 A question was asked whether the West Somerset Planning Team would take account of housing needs surveys in relation to planning agreements in the provision of affordable housing. It was agreed to check this out.

**Addendum** Subsequent to the meeting, the following response was received from Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council's Housing Enabling Lead Officer in regard to paragraph 5.3 above:

Housing Enabling is a Statutory Consultee for Planning applications within West Somerset Planning Authority area and, within any advice I provide, I would include information from the Homefinder system and any relevant Housing Needs Surveys (normally those within the same or neighbouring Parish to the application and which are less than 5 years old). Very few exist at the present time which aren't outdated either due to time or following new provision of affordable housing. Most of the area covered by the Exmoor Area Panel is covered by the Exmoor National Park Planning Authority which also takes account of such surveys.

## **6 SCC Highways**

- 6.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake attended the meeting and presented their planned works in the Exmoor Panel area – the report is attached at Appendix C to the notes of this meeting.
- 6.2 Various detailed questions were put forward by members of the Panel to the County Highways representatives.
- 6.3 Some of the issues raised were technically traffic management matters and the highways representatives present reminded Panel members that another part of County

Highways actually dealt with such issues and they could refer comments/requests on to them but were not personally responsible for taking appropriate action.

6.4 The Chairman thanked the Highways representatives for their attendance.

## **7 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services Issues**

7.1 In the absence of a representative attending, a written report had been submitted and is attached at Appendix D to the notes of this meeting.

## **8 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues**

8.1 In the absence of a representative attending, a written report had been submitted and is attached at Appendix E to the notes of this meeting.

## **9 Parish Lengthsman Scheme Update**

9.1 A representative from Dulverton Town Council reported that the Scheme was progressing well.

## **10 Parish Issues**

10.1 Car parking arrangements in Dulverton – the Chairman of Dulverton Town Council addressed the Panel meeting and explained the background to car parking arrangements in Dulverton which the Town Council had undertaken for a period under the terms of a leasehold arrangement with West Somerset Council.

10.2 Recently the District Council had taken the car park arrangements back in house and were proposing to make changes to charging arrangements particularly in relation to the provision of parking permits. He explained that the Town Council had consistently voiced their opposition to what was proposed and expressed his extreme disappointment that what was being put forward for agreement at a meeting of the Council to be held on 20 September 2017 did not reflect the wishes of the Town Council and as such he felt that the Town Council had not been given the recognition that it should have been in the light that they are the democratically elected body for the local community affected by the proposals.

10.3 The Chairman advised that he was aware that several consultation meetings had been held between Lead Members and Officers of West Somerset Council and Dulverton Town Council and that some modifications were being put forward by the District Council in the light of these discussions.

10.4 The Chairman of the Town Council expressed the view that if the Lion Stables car park could be retained as a short-term car park except for use by permit holders then this would go some way to meet the wishes of the Town Council.

10.5 The Chairman undertook to report this back to the Council before a final decision was to be taken at the Council meeting on 20 September.

10.6 Signpost Project – Cutcombe Parish Council had submitted some detailed questions in regard to the Signposting project and the Chairman reiterated that the Signpost Officer was hoping to attend a future meeting of the Panel when a full discussion could be held on the matter. In the meantime, the Signpost Officer had submitted some written

responses to the points raised and these are provided at Appendix F to the notes of this meeting.

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

- 7 November 2017 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 16 January 2018 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall, Winsford
- 8 March 2018 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross (**please note revised date**)

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm