

## Minehead Area Panel

### Notes of meeting held on 13 March 2013 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Minehead

#### Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Member of the Public
Adrian Dyer	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council
Cllr Doug Ross	West Somerset Council
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr David Sanders	West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Richard Lillis	West Somerset Council
Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker	Somerset County Council
Cllr David Archer	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Marcus Kravis	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Roger Thomas	Minehead Town Council
Sue Sanders	Minehead Town Council
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
Graham Sizer	Minehead Development Trust
PC Mark Curran	Avon & Somerset Police
PCSO McAteer	Avon & Somerset Police
Napoleon Wilcox	Webbers
Val Pickard	Jubilee Cafe
Steve Pickard	Jubilee Cafe
John Clyde Smith	Minehead Cider/Beach Hut
Fay Dyke	Revive Minehead
Anne Clarke	Manor Road Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Mr Singleton	Member of the Public
Mrs Singleton	Member of the Public
Colin Isherwood	Member of the Public
Cath Isherwood	Member of the Public
Mrs P D Collop	Member of the Public
Mrs G E Simpson	Member of the Public
Pete Bird	Member of the Public
Clara Lawrie	Member of the Public
Philippa Gerry	Member of the Public
David Chase	Member of the Public
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

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

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Penny Dobbin (Church of England), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), PS Tom Mayberry (Avon & Somerset Police), Inspector Lisa Simpson (Avon & Somerset Police), Cllr Maureen Smith (West Somerset Council/Transition Minehead & Alcombe), Cllr Paul Grierson (West Somerset Council/Minehead Town Council), Cllr Gail Herbert (Minehead Town Council), John Vicary (Resident), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust).

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

A number of issues were raised as follows:

- (a) *Anne Clarke raised the issue of the speed of traffic entering Alcombe Coombe since the entrance had been tarmaced. The 5mph sign was watermarked and generally ignored.*

Mandy Chilcott advised that Minehead Town Council and the residents had paid for the tarmacing to prevent potholes and the churning of ground, which was leading to possible subsidence of neighbouring properties.

After discussion it was agreed that the best solution was the installation of sleeping policemen/speed humps and Doug Ross suggested that special smaller speed humps could be used, which would slow down cars but not ambulances.

**ACTION: Sue Sanders to look into the cost of sleeping policemen/speed humps.**

It was also noted with concern that motorcycles were only allowed on Alcombe Common for access purposes, but they tended to speed on the Common and not have registration plates. PC Mark Curran explained that they could not enforce compliance with the law easily as they were not able to go off-road. However, they would be happy to act on photographic evidence if it could be collected. Anne felt this would be difficult to obtain due to the speed of the bikers.

- (b) *Anne also raised the issue of the 'keep clear' and arrows written on the corner of Staunton Road and Staunton Lane as the writing/arrows were ugly and only served to move the traffic further into Manor Road.*

Brenda Maitland-Walker felt that the 'keep clear' area had been asked for at a previous Minehead Area Panel meeting as to put in double yellow lines would have needed a Traffic Order.

**ACTION: David Peake to investigate.**

A resident of Manor Road advised that there was a vehicle parked outside her house, which had been there for some time. PC Curran explained that if it was legally insured and not causing an obstruction (ie, she could still exit her driveway) then the Police could not do anything.

- (c) *Pete Bird raised the issue of his neighbour who lights bonfires 16 yards from Mr Bird's back door, three to five times a week and has no regard for his neighbours' health or their washing. Also, some of Mr Bird's neighbours keep cockerels that start crowing from 3.45am and continue throughout the day and evening. Cllr Grierson had said that he would help in anyway he could, and Mr Bird asked whether the Area Panel and local authorities could help too.*

Unfortunately, the meeting noted that there were no time restrictions laid down in current law for when bonfires could and couldn't be lit.

Those present at the meeting, including the Police, stressed that Mr Bird (and the other neighbours affected) should lodge complaints for both issues with the District Council's Environmental Health department, who would be able to investigate the situation. This would mean those lodging the complaints would need to make a record of the details of bonfire lighting and cockerel crowing for Environmental Health to use. If they found evidence of nuisance then they would write to those responsible and if this did not improve the situation they could serve abatement notices.

It was noted that there was also the problem of noise from guinea fowls.

- (d) *John Clyde-Smith raised his idea in order to attract people into Minehead during the tourist season, as follows:*

*The seafront should be pedestrianised over the tourist months. To do this the two way 30mph traffic lanes should be reduced to a single lane 10mph road from Seaward Way roundabout to Tregonwell Road, with the spare traffic lane used for diagonal parking (like Blue Anchor has) to encourage tourists into the town. This would create about 200 extra spaces. The car parking rate should be reduced to 50p per hour with the first half hour free.*

*Secondly, the interest in the town and on the seafront needs to be increased with musicians, artists, car boot sales, entertainment, etc.*

David Peake explained that a Road Traffic Order would be required which could be funded through the award of a bid made to the Small Improvements Scheme programme. Unfortunately, this programme had been completed at the current time until the County Council elections in May. The new administration would then set the criteria for the new bids, however, there would be no guarantee that the bid would be accepted as it would have to compete with a variety of other bids put in by other County Councillors. The Traffic Order itself would require one or more periods of consultation so would take the minimum of six months to determine.

David also pointed out that the idea would involve vehicles reversing into a 'life lane', which was not a good situation.

Regarding the car parking charges, Brenda Maitland-Walker advised that fees for on-street parking were now under the control of Somerset County Council, who had taken them over at the current rates set by West Somerset Council until June 2014. On-street parking charges were to reflect car parking charges, which were set by the district council. As such, it would be unreasonable for the on-street parking fees to be charged at a much lower rate than the car parking charges, and the latter would need to be decreased too. Adrian Dyer pointed out that when Butlins sold the land to West Somerset Council for the upper car park at the end of Warren Road, it was on the basis that the fees remain the same as the on-street parking fees.

Mandy Chilcott stated that car parking charges in Cornwall were generally higher than those on Minehead's seafront.

Brenda felt that Somerset County Council and West Somerset Council needed to discuss the issue of parking fees.

Adrian informed the meeting that the car parking charges would remain unchanged from 1 April 2013, with the exception of the Summerland Road car park where the one hour parking fee would be dropped and it would cost £1 for two hours. Also, a car parking shopping permit would be introduced whereby one vehicle could park for two hours per day in certain car parks for the annual fee of £30. This, would, however, not include parking on the seafront which was under the control of Somerset County Council. To date 80 shopping permits had been sold.

Marcus Kravis and Steve Pickard wondered whether John Clyde-Smith's one-way with parking scheme could be implemented under a temporary road traffic closure for a trial period. David Peake did not think that this would be

possible as temporary road traffic closures were usually designed for short-term works.

Richard Lillis posed the query that if Minehead Town Council/West Somerset Council wanted to stage an event every weekend on the seafront, which would restrict the width of the road, what should they do? David Peake advised that a Road Closure Order would need to be applied for from West Somerset Council and the benefit arising from the event would need to outweigh the disruption to traffic.

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2012**

#### **Matter of Accuracy**

Subject to Item 12 – *County Council Update* being amended from “Brenda Maitland-Walker advised that Somerset County Council’s debt of £360m had now been heavily reduced” to “... Somerset County Council’s debt of £360m had now been reduced by £10m”, the Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### **Matters Arising**

*Item 2(a) – Students from West Somerset Community College parking in The Shires:* Sandra updated the meeting on the situation as follows: John Vicary had spoken to all the residents in The Shires and met with Cllr Paul Grierson. Bob Tennant, a resident, had written a letter, taking into account the residents’ views and issues regarding the new residential development leading off The Shires. This letter had been sent to Richard Newby (County Highways), David Peake (County Highways), Bev Norman (Traffic Team Manager at SCC) and Cllr Paul Grierson. David Peake advised that John Vicary had recently discussed the issues with Richard Newby, who would be looking into the situation with residents.

Sandra advised that she had written to Gaynor Comber, Headteacher of the College, on 13 December 2012 asking if the Governors could consider how best to encourage students to park at the Rugby Club whilst the Local Authorities were looking into the problems encountered by The Shires residents. A reply had been received from Mrs Comber on 17 December suggesting that the streets concerned be changed to ‘residents only’ parking. Sandra had written again to the Headteacher on 15 January 2013 reiterating her plea for Governors to think about how best to ensure that students use the parking area at the Rugby Club which would improve the traffic situation in The Shires until a solution had been found. Nothing more had been heard.

David Sanders advised that Cllr Grierson had met with Gaynor Comber.

*Item 2(b) – Thoughtless parking and congestion in Church Street, Alcombe:* Brenda advised that a Road Traffic Order had been applied for The Close in Alcombe to prevent parking outside Raglan Lodge. This scheme was part of a package of Traffic Regulation Orders being put forward for Minehead.

*Item 2(c) – The need for a hardstanding by the bus stop on Bircham Road near the West Somerset Community College:* David Peake advised that funding for the tarmac was being sought from the School Transport section at Somerset County Council.

*Item 3 – Parking outside the chip shop in Bampton Street, Minehead:* David Peake and Brenda informed the meeting that out for consultation was the proposal to allow one hour parking for up to six parking bays on the western side of Bampton Street. This proposal was also part of the package of Traffic Regulation Orders for Minehead.

*Item 8 – Following a resident's request, Minehead Town Council to consider obtaining a Speed Indicator Advice from SCC for use in The Parks Area of Woodcombe:* The meeting were advised that a Speed Indicator Device would be installed in The Parks during the week commencing 18 March 2013.

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

Brenda Maitland-Walker reported that the Group were currently refreshing the Vision in order to encompass ideas of what people would like to see. The Group had no powers to authorise but could support, whilst West Somerset Council's Cabinet agreed funding. Projects assisted by the Visioning Group included:

- The bandstand in Blenheim Gardens is to be re-wired and decorated by Easter.
- The Lift Project at the Regal Theatre.
- Signage throughout the Enterprise Park - and it is hoped to continue this throughout the town.
- A business study being worked on by the Visioning Manager into the use of the old hospital for the community.
- Minehead Events Group hosting the ice rink in Wellington Square during the half-term of February 2013.
- Events programme for the Summer and to continue throughout the Winter.

#### **5. Minehead Development Trust (MDT) – an update**

In Jenny Lennon-Wood's absence, Graham Sizer reported the following:

In December 2012 West Somerset Council's Cabinet approved the hospital as a community asset, which gives the community/MDT six months to put in a bid on the building when it comes to being sold. MDT had until 19 August to submit a bid. However, Somerset NHS Partnership Trust were currently disputing the nomination as they believed the hospital to be exempt from Community Asset registration.

David Sanders added that Somerset NHS Partnership Trust's challenge would be debated by West Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 18 March. They were arguing that notification to sell wasn't an agreement to sell and that the hospital was exempt from community asset registration. Adrian Dyer would be deciding the matter.

Graham continued to inform the meeting that on 5 March a meeting had been held between PropCo – the Government's property company – and MDT. The talks had gone well. A new independent valuation report had been done, the contents of which

remained confidential. MDT still had access to the old hospital and could obtain advice on how to restore it, and also had permission to use the forecourt, for which a diary was held by Sue Sanders, Minehead Town Council Clerk. On 20 March MDT representatives would be meeting with PropCo representatives on site. Somerset Building Preservation Trust (SBPT) were providing support for the project and MDT would be stepping up their quest for pledges of support, fundraising, etc.

The opening hours of Tourist Information Centre would soon be moving to 12noon to 4pm seven days per week.

## **6. Police Report**

PC Mark Curran reported that there was a very low crime rate in Minehead/West Somerset. 33.4% of crimes had been solved to date which was higher than this time last year. Anti social behaviour was much lower than it used to be.

Inspector Lisa Simpson was being promoted from the post of Inspector. From 19 March this post would be filled on a temporary six month basis by Inspector Carey until the recruitment procedure for a permanent postholder had been undertaken. PC Curran advised that whereas Lisa was responsible for all officers but 999s, Inspector Carey and subsequent inspectors would be responsible for all officers including 999s.

## **7. Highway Matters**

David Peake reported the following:

### **Ongoing Highway Works:**

The water main refurbishment on the Alcombe Road would be completed week commencing 18 March and the water main refurbishment along Hopcott Road would be completed on 28 March 2013.

### **Future Highway Works:**

Carriageway resurfacing along the northern leg of Hillview Close from 14 to 21 March.

Footway repairs along The Parade from 18 to 28 March, and then again after Easter from 2 to 5 April.

Carriageway resurfacing along Paganel Way on 18 March only.

Carriageway resurfacing along the eastern section of King George Road on 19 and 20 March.

Various Traffic Regulation Orders were currently in their public consultation phase, as follows: Holloway Street (east), The Close, Alcombe, Bernard Crescent (at the junction with Paganel Road), Station Terrace and Bampton Street (west).

The meeting felt it was disappointing to note that a utility company had just dug up part of Hillview Road for works and resurfaced it and now it could be dug up again as part of County's resurfacing works.

PC Curran advised that as part of the Traffic Regulation Order it was proposed to paint chevrons at the junction of Bernard Crescent and Paganel Road to prevent parking. Anyone found parked on the chevrons would be warned first and then ticketed if they did not heed the warning.

Doug Ross advised that the bench alongside the bus stop outside the Regal Theatre, which had been taken by contractor, Balfour Beatty, had been returned.

It was noted that the signs at Park Street were now illegible.

Graham pointed out that it had been 32 years since the paving slabs had been re-done in Friday Street and there were now 17 broken slabs.

Andrew Hadley asked whether a speed limit of 40mph sign on the Porlock Road (A39) could be moved past the West Somerset Caravan Park as the sign was not clear to drivers who tended to do much greater speeds as they could not see the sign. David Peake asked Andrew to bring this to Minehead Town Council's attention.

**ACTION: Andrew Hadley to bring to the attention of Minehead Town Council the need to move a speed limit sign along the Porlock Road.**

#### **8. Burning Issues**

No report was available from the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

#### **9. Town Council Update**

In the absence of Cllr Grierson, Sue Sanders reported the following:

- The Town Council were in partnership with West Somerset Community College whereby the Council would pay the College to grow half the flowers required by the Town Council. In time it was hoped that they would be able to produce all the plants needed for Minehead.
- Minehead Town Council would be weed spraying in Minehead and Alcombe in mid-April and mid-September and would start to cut the grass verges when dry. Somerset County Council would be cutting the grass in May and August and the Town Council would do extra cuts as necessary.
- Minehead Town Council would be maintaining the roundabouts for Somerset County Council.
- New wrought iron benches had been installed in The Parade at a cost of £5,000 to replace two wooden benches that had fallen apart. The round benches would remain for the time being. It was hoped to continue with new benches down The Avenue if S106 funding was available and approved.
- A tractor had been purchased.
- £20,000 had been spent on new play equipment for the Periton Way playing field.
- £6,000 had been given in grants by the Town Council.
- £10,000 had been granted to the Regal Theatre to help them finish the lift project and Doug Ross added that this grant was instrumental in helping the Regal apply for LARC funding.
- MTC were contributing to West Somerset Council to keep the flower displays in the town centre.
- King George IV playing field was currently very wet due to work to renew the water pipes. It was intended to submit a bid for S106 funding in order to install additional play equipment in the park.

Anne Clarke asked for the whereabouts of a bench that had disappeared on Alcombe Common. Sue advised that it was hoped to erect a new bench on the Common. Sue was also happy for Dunster Lodge to have any of the old benches that the Town Council no longer needed.

#### **10. District Council Update**

Adrian reported the following:

- A Ministerial Announcement was expected on Tuesday, 19 March in respect of the decision of the Development Consent Order for the erection of a nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C. However, EDF Energy had yet to agree with

the Government over the guaranteed price of electricity. Both Tim Taylor, Leader of the Council, and himself had written to the Government stating that the community were geared up in the main to the development of Hinkley Point C and that a negative decision would have a huge impact on the jobs and skills available in West Somerset and the surrounding area.

- Welfare reforms were to be introduced on 1 April 2013, which would have a huge impact on the society of West Somerset. It would be the biggest reform in the last sixty years.
- The Aquasplash site was to be marketed soon. Approval for its marketing would be sought from the Cabinet at their June meeting.
- Contracts were almost ready for signing for the sale of land at Seaward Way, for fifty houses, 17 of which were to be affordable.
- Originally it was planned to close the public toilets beneath The Carousel and in Blenheim Gardens. However, after consultation the Cabinet and Council have approved recommendations to keep the Blenheim Garden toilets open from April to October, plus the disabled toilets at The Carousel.
- Sand clearance along The Esplanade to the Golf Club would be done on an infrequent basis as there were no funds for regular clearance. However, it should be cleared in time for Easter. The Environment Agency would be undertaking major work on sand clearance at the Golf Club end of the seafront from 25 March in order to make the sea wall a more effective flood barrier.
- A Flooding Summit was to be held on 15 March at Taunton Cricket Club. Attending would be the Somerset district and county councils and five parishes from each district; plus some local MPs and the Environment Agency.
- West Somerset Council would be meeting with the new Police Inspector (Inspector Carey) and the new Police Commissioner (Sue Mountstevens).

## **11. County Council Update**

Brenda Maitland-Walker reported the following:

- A Health and Wellbeing Fund of £10,000 was hopefully to be rolled out next year for Councillors to spend, which should enable the Active Living Centre at the Minehead Baptist Church in Parks Lane to be continued.
- The Autumnal floods had not been helped by blocked culverts and trashed screens, which were the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- The County Council had set up a Community Flood Relief Fund of £20,000 and a Flood Prevention Fund of £200,000. Andrew Hadley asked if businesses could apply for flood relief; Brenda said it was usually for residential aid.

## **12. Any Other Business**

### **Out-of-hours medical telephone no.**

Mandy Chilcott reported that the above number was going to become 111.

### **Taunton & Somerset NHS Trust**

Doug Ross stated that he was a representative on the above body.

### **New facilities in Sedgemoor**

Marcus Kravis asked how Bridgwater had been able to get a £6million swimming pool. Adrian explained that Sedgemoor District Council was a fairly affluent local authority. The amount of development and house building was huge and every time a new band D property was built the Government gave the local authority concerned £1,450. West Somerset gets £283,000 per annum, but Sedgemoor gets £2.3million per annum. Sedgemoor also has no debts having sold the Sedgemoor Splash site to Tesco. And much of the money from the S106 agreement with Tesco paid for the swimming pool. Sedgemoor District Council were also planning to build an ice-rink at Burnham-on-Sea.



**13. Date & Venue of Future Meetings**

**Future meetings to be held on:**

Wednesday 12 June 2013 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe

Wednesday, 11 September 2013

Wednesday, 11 December 2013

Wednesday, 12 March 2014