Minehead Area Panel

Notes of meeting held on 14 March 2012 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Minehead

Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)

Adrian Dyer

Cllr Doug Ross

Cllr Richard Lillis

Cllr Andrew Hadley

Member of the Public

West Somerset Council

West Somerset Council

West Somerset Council

Cllr Maureen Smith West Somerset Council/Transition Minehead & Alcombe

Cllr Paul Grierson Minehead Town Council/ West Somerset Council

Cllr Val Welch
Cllr Marcus Kravis
Minehead Town Council
Minehead Town Council
Minehead Town Council
Somerset County Council
Steve Read
Somerset Waste Partnership
Andy Mallinson
PS Tom Mayberry
Avon & Somerset Police

PS Tom Mayberry Avon & Somerset Police Inspector Lisa Simpson Avon & Somerset Police

Chris Jones Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Jenny Lennon-Wood Minehead Development Trust
Graham Sizer Minehead Chamber of Commerce

Joe Heley Minehead Eye Jess Prendergast Minehead Eye

Andy McCausland Minehead Baptist Church

Sally MacLean

Clara Lawrie

Jenny Carter

Meigan Lyons

John Langdon

Sue Lloyd

The Hope Centre

About My Area website

Member of the Public

Member of the Public

Member of the Public

John Vicary Member of the Public 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 Penny Dobbin (Church of England), Cllr David Sanders (West Somerset Council), David Peake (Somerset County Council Highways)

2. Have Your Say - Community Issues/Concerns

Sandra reminded those present that if issues were sent to Sarah in advance of the meeting then it would be aimed, as far as possible, to have the answers available at the meeting.

Paul Grierson raised the issue relating to Alcombe Christian Spiritualist Church's current listed building application which proposed internal alterations which would increase the seating area internally and through increased attendance could indirectly adversely affect parking in the area. Unfortunately, this application, together with the Church's planning application for the retention of a new fence, could not be determined by West Somerset Council's Planning Committee as there were

no planning grounds on which they could be 'called in' to Committee. Highway issues were not a material planning consideration for either application.

The meeting acknowledged that there was a problem with parking and congestion in that part of Alcombe but Brenda Maitland-Walker advised that Highways did not like putting yellow lines in Conservation Areas.

It was noted that there could be fire safety issues relating to the height of Alcombe Christian Spiritualist Church's fencing and Chris Jones said that he would approach the Fire Prevention Officer in Taunton.

ACTION: Chris Jones to approach the Fire Prevention Officer in Taunton regarding the height of the fence at Alcombe Christian Spiritualist Church

After the meeting Sarah spoke to the Trust Secretary who recognised that there was a problem with parking in the Manor Road area and was happy to raise the issue of the traffic problems at the next Trustees meeting on 17 March 2012, particularly with the possibility of encouraging their parishioners to car share and to ascertain the times of services held by other churches in the area to avoid possible clashes.

The Trust are now making appeals to their congregation to car share when and where possible, to consider using public transport if available, and when the weather is clement to consider attending on foot. They hope that these appeals will help to address any parking problems.

Sarah also emailed Somerset Highways and received the following reply from Richard Newby, Traffic Engineer with the West Somerset Area Office: "I'm afraid that apart from laying down yellow lines, thereby reducing the amount of parking, there is little to be done to alleviate the situation around the Manor Road/Brook Street Junction. Even then, because of the very limited parking in the area, there would most likely be considerable opposition to any proposal to introduce more parking restrictions.

All I can suggest is that if there is any specific point where congestion occurs, it might be possible and sensible to install a 'keep clear' marking. However, I think it best that we wait to see the effect that an increase of ten in the congregation has, before changing the present arrangements".

3. Update on Minehead Eye – report by Jess Prendergast and Joe Heley

Jess Prendergast explained that she was the social researcher and graphic designer and undertook the audits. Every six months they had to report to the Lottery and she and Joe Heley handed out copies of their February 2012 newsletter, which reported on how they had achieved and exceeded most of their outcomes/targets associated with their grant provision. For instance by November 2011 they had aimed to have 1300 young people through their doors and this figure had been exceeded by about 30%. They were mainly between 10 and 15 years of age and residents of West Somerset. Many tourists also used the centre and they were charged more which helped to subsidise the cost to local members and non-members. In addition to youth provision, popular seniors' lunches were held and having CLOWNS sharing building space meant that they were also running activities for toddlers and a mums café club.

Skateboard, BMX, inline and scooter 'skools' were run where about 30 teenagers worked with the under 10s, teaching them skills in the park. These 'teachers' undertook this role on a voluntary basis and were keen to help, building good relationships with their younger peers in the process. For their effort they were rewarded with free skating time. About 12,000 skate sessions had been run to date.

The Centre was run by a Community Interest Company, which had about 1,000 members, of which approximate 700 were under 20 years old. In addition, girls only nights were very successful with about 200 members attending these.

The Eye were committed to delivering against outcomes in five areas: creativity, confidence, community, inclusion and well-being when they were awarded their Myplace grant, and to date had achieved a minimum of 85% in each area.

Joe Heley was the Centre Manager. He circulated their activity flier for Feb to May and advised that the Eye had been nominated for best skate park in the country and been awarded funding for their 'Making it in the Music Industry' course from the children's charity, Youth Music.

Users of the centre travelled from as far as Bath and Exeter regularly and they worked with youth clubs, holiday parks, etc. Through the holidays they tended to put on special buses to enable and encourage people to attend. The youngsters treated each other and the adults with respect and over the 18 months they had been open they had only had one 'worrying' incident.

Adrian asked whether older people used the facility. Jess and Joe explained that there were veteran nights on Fridays, the café was open to all and senior lunches were held on Wednesdays and computer courses had been run for the older generations. They found that the different generations mixed very well. Adrian felt that this was important, particularly as West Somerset had a large ageing population and younger people were becoming increasingly needed to look after the older section of society.

In addition to putting on activities, Minehead Eye had hosted various events, such as the Forum 21 Energy Fair, the Tourism Exchange and the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Participatory Budgeting event, plus various exhibitions.

Sally MacLean asked whether The Eye worked with disadvantaged children. Jess explained that it was difficult to identify disadvantaged children from non-disadvantaged children and they did not want to segregate them so it was difficult to know how many disadvantaged children had used the centre. However the 'Give it a Go' scheme run through the schools had allowed disadvantaged children to be referred to Minehead Eye to attend music workshops, etc. They were still working on how to approach the integration of disadvantaged children, which was an evolving issue.

Sandra thanked Jess and Joe for providing a very informative, interesting and eagerly awaited report on the success of Minehead Eye.

4. <u>Sort-It Plus – presentation by Steve Read, Managing Director, and Andy</u> Mallinson, Operations Officer, Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

Steve explained that Members of each of the five district councils in Somerset were on the Somerset Waste Management Board. They wanted to get away from putting waste into landfill, which produced methane over time and polluted the water table. It was also very expensive as landfill sites were become scarcer and the Government continually raised landfill tax.

Much waste had an economic value and could be re-used, for instance it used 1/20th of the amount of energy to make a recycled can out of aluminium cans than make one out of aluminium ore. Newsprint was 100% recycled paper, yet magazines were printed on new paper so it was particularly important to recycle magazines.

Sort-It Plus added plastic bottles and food wastes to the existing recycling collections. The more waste was recycled the less waste was put into landfill thus avoiding landfill tax so that more money could be put into assisting the districts. The scheme was also attracting money from Marks & Spencer.

The DEFRA Waste Review 2011 recommended the work that SWP were already doing in terms of waste prevention: re-using, recycling and composting, energy recovery and finally disposal. Also, plastic bottle recycling led to a reduction in the amount of CO₂ produced.

Various problems had been encountered when Sort-It Plus was introduced into West Somerset, such as:

- Problems with bin deliveries.
- Narrow access vehicles found to be needed in some areas.
- Some collections rounds needed to be rescheduled.

In West Somerset over the first three months of Sort-It Plus (November 2011 to January 2012) there had been a reduction in the amount of material going to landfill, an increase in dry recycling, and food waste had been introduced into the compostable chain, leading to an increase in recycling/composting from 30% to 50%.

Food waste was currently dealt with at Dimmer, near Castle Cary, where it was shredded and mixed with a woody material and placed in large sheds/vessels where it composted rapidly for seven days, during which time air was pumped into the vessel, and then after another seven days of composting, it matured over six to ten weeks to produce an organic garden material. However, anaerobic digestion was now thought to be better than the above process as in addition to a good quality fertiliser being manufactured for use by farmers, no oxygen was added and methane (natural gas) was produced as a by-product, which could be sold to the gas grid or used to generate electricity. Terms had been agreed with Viridor to build an anaerobic digester at Walpole near Bridgwater in about 12 months time.

SWP publicised on their website where all the waste, recycling materials, etc. went to; 90% of it was processed within the UK. Steve then explained that paper and cardboard were now segregated as the cardboard went to the paper mill in Watchet whilst the paper went to a paper mill in Kent, whereas prior to Sort-It Plus it could go into the same box as it all went to Watchet paper mill. It was also easier to segregate recyclables at the roadside as it prevented contamination.

Finally, Steve reminded the Panel to put out their bins and boxes by 7am.

Questions and Answers:

Richard Lillis asked why PET packaging was sent to landfill. Steve explained that SWP were looking into expanding the range of plastics they could collect for recycling, but at present they could only take plastic bottles.

Marcus Kravis asked if you could put out extra boxes of recyclables. Steve replied that it did not matter how many boxes were put out as long as all the different materials were kept separated.

John Langdon asked whether there were any plans to incinerate waste. Steve answered that SWP would prefer to recycle rather than incinerate but incineration was always an option for energy recovery, where they would work with the appropriate contractors.

John Vicary asked why tetra pak and combi packs could only be taken to recycling centres/banks or put in for waste disposal. Steve advised that these types of

packaging were only a small proportion of the overall waste stream, but could not be recycled by SWP as the industries would not pay for their recycling. Richard Lillis further advised that the industries would need to send the packaging to Sweden for recycling where the contents of the packaging could be broken down, which was too expensive to do in the UK.

Meigan Lyons commented on how boxes fall over on windy days. Andy explained that the crew were trained to put the boxes, once emptied, into each other to prevent them from blowing away, but if only one box was put out then there could be a problem. It was also acknowledged that the small wheelie bins were unfortunately unwieldy.

Sandra thanked Steve and Andy for an informative and helpful presentation.

5. <u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2011</u>

Matter of Accuracy

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the meaning of Meigan Lyons' comment being added regarding the pavement alongside Whitegate Road being resurfaced, in that this pavement had been resurfaced even though it got very little use compared to Friday Street, which was used by a much greater number of people. Agenda item 2 (a) – Replacement paving in Friday Street, on page 1 refers.

Matters Arising

Item 2(c) – Damaged BT box opposite the bottom end of Friday Street outside Blockbusters: Sarah advised that this box was again permanently repaired in early February 2012.

Item 6 – out of hours emergency cover by medical professionals in West Somerset: Brenda Maitland-Walker advised that this issue had been discussed by both Somerset County Council and West Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committees. A meeting had not yet been set up with the South Western Ambulance Services HNS Foundation Trust and the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – the two bodies responsible for out of hours cover, and there had been no contact by either organisation regarding a possible presentation to the Area panel on the Out of Hours Service.

ACTION: It was agreed that Sarah should write to Jan Hull again, on behalf of Minehead Area Panel, to ask for a meeting to be set up.

A letter was sent to Jan Hull on 11 April 2012. A reply was received on 2 May 2012 from Caroline Parry, Urgent and Emergency Care Commissioning Manager for NHS Somerset, stating that the representatives of the Somerset GP Out of Hours Service provided by South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust, and the Somerset Partnership would be happy to meet with the Panel and asking for details of dates, preferred venue, the context and background that have led to concerns being raised about medical emergency cover in West Somerset, plus an indication of the questions that may be asked.

Item 6 – Business waste collection and disposal: Adrian apologised for not yet contacting Somerset Waste Partnership to ascertain whether there were any plans to help businesses co-ordinate their waste collection and disposal and it was agreed that Sarah would contact SWP on his behalf.

ACTION: It was agreed that Sarah would contact Somerset Waste Partnership to ascertain whether there were any plans to help businesses co-ordinate their waste collection and disposal.

Sarah contacted Somerset Waste Partnership on 10 April 2012 and was advised that there is a great deal of information available on business recycling and waste on their website link: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/business In addition, until March 2011 they had external funding for a Business Recycling Advisor, Helen Ridler, who worked with the Chamber of Commerce and other contacts in Minehead. If SWP can give further help to the Panel or any of the members directly they are happy to do so.

Item 6 – Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE): Adrian advised that CPE would start on 12 June 2012.

Item 12 – Community Event: Penny Dobbin had emailed Adrian with details of her event suggestion so that he could put it to the next meeting of strategic delivery partners and she would await their response. Penny, by email, had also advised that a Community Day was being held on 30 March 2012 at the United Reformed Church in Bancks Street, Minehead, where various community groups would have displays.

6. Police Report

Tom Mayberry reported that there had been 1604 crimes within the sector over the past year to date, which was 77 up on last year. However, the crime detection rate was 36%, which partly explained the increase in the number of known crimes.

The priorities for the sector and Minehead in particular were:

- School patrols
- Town patrols (shoplifting and criminal element)
- Licensed premises
- Duke of Wellington at weekends, particularly 12am to 3am.

37 offences had taken place in the last 14 days including theft, sexual assault, handling of stolen goods, drug offences, domestic arguments, criminal damage, dog bite, malicious communication, loitering, burglary, common assault, bodily harm, fuel thefts from petrol stations.

The officers looking after Alcombe were: PC Fitzpatrick, PCSO Linda Brooks and PCSO Luisa Skinner.

The officers looking after Minehead were: PC Mark Curran, PCSO Jon McAteer, PCSO Mark Middleton-Smith and PCSO Jo Dawson.

Andy McCausland expressed concern with the Butlins adult weekends and the environment of 24 hour drinking enabled by the licensing laws. Lisa Simpson advised that the Police had a good relationship with Butlins and Tom planned all the patrols over the adult weekends. During these weekends two more police officers would be patrolling (ie, six rather than four) and six special constables were to be provided by Butlins for the Minehead area. Tom was also aware of the licensing laws, which had not led to a significant increase in crime, rather an increase in the fear of crime. Furthermore, if the Police took a guest back to Butlins for offending, the holiday resort would send him/her home immediately. Of the 6,000 attendees over an adult weekend only a small proportion (about 30) people caused problems.

Andy was particularly unhappy with 'kerbside drinking' and felt businesses needed to take responsibility to ensure drinkers remained within the curtilage of the business premises.

Marcus informed the meeting that when he used to run The Queens Hall, he could bring in more money in one day during a Butlins adult weekend than in two months of 'normal' business.

7. Strategic Vision for Minehead – an update

Brenda informed the meeting of the history of Minehead Visioning Group in that it had been set up after West Somerset Council (WSC) was awarded £200,000 Seaside Strategy funding. This funding was ring-fenced for use in the town and given to deal with economic development, unemployment and improving Minehead's vibrancy. WSC set up the Visioning Group at the request of Minehead Area Panel and was made up of representatives of Minehead Town Council, WSC, Chamber of Trade, Somerset Skills & Learning, West Somerset Community College, Engage, Minehead Eye, Regal Theatre, Butlins, West Somerset Railway, Minehead Development Trust and Somerset County Council.

The Group had developed an Action Plan and looked at potential project ideas and a list of objectives to enhance Minehead's position as a key economic centre. From this Action Plan a list of projects had been identified to receive funding, including the Regal Theatre's Lift Off Appeal, refurbishment of Blenheim Garden's bandstand, support of Minehead Development Trust's bid for Heritage Lottery funding, and improved signage.

The signage would include directional finger posts and interpretation signs with QR codes placed on certain signs to enable those with smart phones to download the Minehead Town App. The Town App was a smart phone App that was being developed for Minehead and would comprise a full directory of Minehead businesses, events, attractions, transport information and an interactive map. It was proposed that a dog walking leaflet would be distributed via veterinary surgeries, the library and dog friendly accommodation within the town. This information would also be made available via the Minehead App.

New bench seating had been purchased for The Esplanade, which would hopefully be in position by Easter and market stalls were to be purchased and used for a range of activities. Also an 'Art Markets co-operative was being established with the aim to run monthly markets at the West Somerset Railway station.

The employment of a Minehead Vision Manager had been agreed in principle but further work needed to be done on the detail of the post before the Group was ready to present a report to WSC's Cabinet. The Group also hoped to use some of the money to provide community services, skills and training to help people secure employment and help young entrepreneurs.

8. <u>District Council Update</u>

Adrian advised of the following:

• A report was going to Cabinet in April recommending that the District Council no longer maintained those areas of land in the ownership of Somerset County Council. For years Somerset County Council had paid WSC for the cost of the maintenance, however, over the years the District Council had received a steadily decreased sum and had worked out that the projected cost for 2013 would be £22,000 whilst the reimbursement from the County Council would be only £3,000. The land in question included high profile areas, such as the Ellicombe roundabout and the grassy banks by the roundabout (which were in fact in Dunster); land down Seaward Way; the roundabouts near Butlins, at the golf club and at Quay West; and the land at Hopcott Corner. WSC had tried to persuade Somerset County Council to provide more finance, but this was against current

County policy. Brief initial talks had been held with Minehead Town Council whereby Somerset County Council could possibly work with the Town Council to maintain these areas. Where areas were currently sponsored the monies would be refunded, although the sponsors would be encouraged to negotiate sponsorship deals with Minehead Town Council if the Town Council decided to take over the maintenance.

- A report on the provision of tourist information services would be going to Cabinet in April.
- On 20 March the street route for the Olympic Torch relay through West Somerset would be allowed to be made public.
- The official opening of the new coach park by the West Somerset Railway took place recently and was already in use, with good feedback.
- Sand would be cleared off The Esplanade before Easter. This task would not be undertaken weekly as in the past.
- Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) would be implemented on 12 June 2012. WSC would not be joining the partnership as the business case for them to join did not 'stack up'. Cabinet would make the formal decision on 16 April.
- There would be a preliminary hearing by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) in Bridgwater on 21 March 2012 for the Development Consent Order (DCO) for Hinkley Point C. It was estimated that the determination period for the DCO would be six months.

9. <u>Minehead Development Trust – an update</u>

Jenny Lennon-Wood, Chair of the Minehead Development Trust (MDT) reported that MDT had started in 2008 as an informal group to save the old hospital. It had since evolved into a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered charity. Its members comprised representatives from the arts, local authorities, commerce and community/voluntary sector.

Current projects included:

The secret garden (old Clanville nursery site) – a feasibility study was being undertaken regarding turning it into a community garden. Has particular features including a geological section.

Minehead Tourist Information Centre – a business plan to run a TIC had been submitted to West Somerset Council.

Old hospital – the plan was to secure a complex of buildings as a cultural and heritage hub consisting of three listed buildings and 'dross' (buildings which may be removed). The old hospital formed a focal point for the community creating a flow of people around the town from seafront to town and vice versa, taking in Blenheim Gardens. The development could create quality jobs and an indoor tourism attraction.

Consultation with the community had raised the wish for the old hospital to contain the library and TIC and the creation of a museum, which was being worked on with Minehead Conservation Society who through running exhibitions had built up a store of materials over time.

The plan was also to restore the assembly rooms on the upper floor to create a space for performances, exhibitions, meetings, etc. In addition, there would be areas for shops, housing, offices, etc. which would generate the income required for the community areas.

Submission of funding bids – MDT were currently working to put in a bid to the Coastal Communities fund in late Spring/early Summer. A pre-application for funding had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery last year and a meeting was being held in Exeter next week to discuss feedback, prior to a full application being put in during late Spring/early Summer. Minehead Visioning Group had agreed to provide the financial assistance required for putting together the papers, etc.

Pledges from the community were being requested for when the project on the old hospital commenced.

10. Highway Matters

In David Peake's absence, Sandra read out an email which David had sent to the Panel regarding the works along the A39 at Bilbrook finishing early. In the email Somerset Highways thanked all users of the A39 for their patience over the last two weeks during the replacement of the highway drainage system and confirmed that the works had finished a day and a half early. However, the Police had had to be called during the second week due to the number of motorists that ignored the official Road Closure and attempted to use their normal route. Those vehicles that had chosen to ignore the closure and drivers/passengers who had provided verbal abuse to the operatives had been reported to the Police.

David's email continued as follows: "Somerset Highways take the safety and welfare of our employees very seriously, due to the nature of their work that places them in high risk situations. Unfortunately, even after we have taken significant steps to protect their safety, a minority of road users continue to abuse, injure and kill road workers nationally who are doing a vital job to help keep our roads safe. Annually there are around five road workers killed and 12 major injuries".

Marcus stated that the signs had not been removed one afternoon when the road was due to be open so he had not known whether the road was open or not. Brenda advised that the workers put up some signs, whilst the road closure signs were put up by the Police. She explained that the drainage works had needed to be done for some years and due to its nature had had to be carried out in daylight hours.

Brenda read out David Peake's report on planned highway works in the Minehead area, as follows:

The Parade	Footway repairs	20 February to 20 March
A39 east of Washford	Carriageway repairs	12 March to 16 March
Bircham Road	Carriageway resurfacing	14 March to 16 March
A39 east of Washford	Carriageway resurfacing (Temp road closures in eve/	
A358 WSR Black Arch Bridge Sampford Brett	Carriageway resurfacing (Temporary road closures in	
A39 Heddon Cross	Carriageway resurfacing (Temporary road closures in	•
West Street (steep section at eastern end)	Carriageway resurfacing (Temporary road closures fo	•
Dugdale Street	Carriageway resurfacing (Temporary road closures fo	•

A Traffic Regulation Order had been advertised in Autumn 2011 regarding proposed waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the junction of Paganel Road and Cher and representations had been received. Taking these into account the proposal had been modified to just restricting waiting for ten metres either side of all four corners. No objections had been received to this revised proposal. The Determination Report had gone to the Somerset County Council Traffic Manager and a decision was awaited.

In addition, David requested suggestions for the 2013 Carriageway Surface Dressing Programme – please let him know your suggestions at the next Minehead Area panel meeting on 20 June.

11. <u>Burning Issues</u>

Chris Jones reported that Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service had held a Participatory Budgeting event at Minehead Eye on 27 February, which over 80 people had attended. £5,000 was the amount to be shared out but another £1,000 had been found so the following organisations all benefited:

St Michaels First School – funding for new swimming pool - £2,500 Minehead Eye – funding for skootability course - £1,150 Exmoor Coast Federation (of schools) – funding for fire safety training - £1,100 CLOWNS – funding for outdoor activity and road safety - £750 Minehead Cycling Club – funding for high visibility clothing - £500

There had been some uncontrolled burning on North Hill. The number of farm related fire incidents in Somerset was on the increase and earlier that day the Fire & Rescue Service had provided businesses with free fire extinguisher and fire safety training at the Wheddon Cross cattle market.

12. <u>Town Council Update</u>

Paul Grierson reported the following:

- Flags were to be put up around the town for the Olympics and Diamond Jubilee.
- Talks were still ongoing regarding the future of Minehead Football Club.
- Devolution talks with WSC were ongoing, although in principle it had been decided that Minehead Town Council would undertake the street cleaning where there was a cross-over of staff and areas.
- The Town Council were looking to get funding of £3,000 to £3,500 from Somerset County Council to undertake the grass cutting, but they did not have the necessary plant and machinery to do the task. The golf club and rugby club would be approached to assist with their neighbouring roundabouts and they would talk to current sponsors with a view to continuing sponsorship.

Brenda informed the meeting that WSC had delegated powers to undertake the grass cutting on behalf of Somerset County Council (SCC) and the delegated powers needed to be formally passed back to SCC before any negotiations could take place between Somerset County Council and Minehead Town Council.

13. <u>Date & Venue of Future Meetings</u>

Future meetings to be held on:

Wednesday 20 June 2012 Wednesday 12 September 2012 Wednesday 12 December 2012 Wednesday, 13 March 2013