

DUNSTER AREA PANEL – NOTES OF MEETING

MONDAY 18 APRIL 2016

COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WILLITON

Attendees: Cllr Faye Barringer-Capp (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Harrison, Bicknoller Parish Council
Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker, Carhampton Parish Council
Cllr Christine Oliver, Dunster Parish Council
Cllr R Buckingham, Elworthy Parish Council
Cllr Geoffrey Williams, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Phil Gannon, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Smith, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Marilyn Crothers, Nettlecombe Parish Council
Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellow, West Somerset Council & Crowcombe Parish Council
Cllr Martin Dewdney, West Somerset Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence, Somerset County Council
James Guscott, Devon & Somerset Fire Service
Karin Harwood, SCC Highways
David Peake, SCC Highways
Jane Birch, Community Council for Somerset
Debbie Dennis, Community Council for Somerset
Steven Salter, Somerset County Gazette
Shirlene Adam, Director – Operations, West Somerset Council
Eileen Ford, Executive Assistant, West Somerset Council

1) “Have Your Say” – Community Issues

Cllr Marilyn Crothers raised the issue of the different roof colours being used in a development in Nettlecombe and wanted to know what, if any, planning conditions were in place regarding this. Cllr Phil Gannon mentioned that this particular development was going to be an agenda item at the next Parish Council meeting.

Concern was raised regarding road safety and in particular the A39 with three accidents taking place on one day. Another concern raised was the road from Chapel Cleeve towards Watchet. Karin Harwood agreed to look at the photographs provided and see if there was anything further that SCC Highways could do to improve the situation.

Cllr Phil Gannon raised concerns about the road safety at the bends at Bilbrook and by the Post Office in Washford. There had recently been a couple of low speed incidents involving vehicles at both of these places. Karin confirmed that there had been three incidents when the Police had been

called to attend. A discussion took place regarding the issue of installing red anti-skidding surface to warn drivers of the dangers. SCC Highways have changed their policy and no longer install this type of road surface.

Cllr Christine Lawrence requested if Matthew Dolman could be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the future of Williton hospital. Concern was raised regarding the current public transport facilities available to residents if Williton hospital were to close or reduce their current facilities. Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker informed the panel that the WSC Scrutiny Committee were in processing of trying to get someone from the Clinical Commissioning Group to attend a Scrutiny meeting. It was agreed that Shirlene would write to the Clinical Commission Group and invite them to attend a meeting.

2) Apologies

Apologies were received after the meeting from Steve Eggar.

3) Notes of Meeting Held on 25 January 2016 and Matters Arising

There were no amendments to the notes of the meeting held on 25 January 2016. The notes were then approved.

4) Community Council for Somerset

Jane Birch and Debbie Dennis from the Community Council for Somerset attended the meeting to give information on the work they do to help local communities. CCS started in 1926 and provide help and expertise in respect of consultancy services to public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Jane explained that the CCS can help community projects with event management, consultation and funding. For example, Debbie is a village agent who works with vulnerable individuals to access information and services which help to improve their life. In respect of funding CCS have a portal database which includes funding opportunities from Europe, national and regional scheme, including local initiatives to help provide local communities with a bespoke report with funding search results. This portal was recently used to develop a funding plan to secure a sustainable future for The Roxy, Axbridge's community cinema.

The CCS have recently worked with Neroche Parish Council. The Parish Council remained concerned regarding affordable housing for locals. The CCS helped with assisting with a housing need survey within the parish to establish if more affordable housing is required within the parish.

The Chair thanked Jane and Debbie for an informative talk. Leaflets were available at the end of the meeting which provided further information regarding the service of the CCS.

5) Police Report

There was no representation from the Police and a report was not available.

6) Highways Report

David and Karin provided the following update to the Panel – see the next page.

**Planned Works in Dunster Panel Area
April 2016**

West Somerset House, Williton 18

| | Parish/Town | Location | Description | Start | Finish | Duration |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Completed | | | | | | |
| SCC | Old Cleeve | Lower Bilbrook Lane | Drainage work. | | Completed | |
| SCC | Old Cleeve | Huish Lane, Washford | Drainage work. | | Completed | |
| SCC | Brompton Ralph | Scarr Chapel Lane, Pitsford Hill | Repairs to parapet of Scarr Bridge | | Completed | |
| SCC | Nettlecombe | B3190 Sticklepath | Drainage works | | Completed | |
| SCC | Watchet | B3191 Cleeve Hill | Carriageway resurfacing | | Completed | |
| SCC | Luxborough | Vellors Way | Carriageway reconstruction following flood damage on 6 th February. | | Completed | |
| Ongoing | | | | | | |
| SCC | Dunster | Bonniton Lane | Damage to bridge at Nutcombe Bottom. Emergency road closure. | 26 Feb | 29 Apr | 9 weeks |
| SCC | Minehead & Dunster | A39 Bircham Road | Resurfacing of Ellicombe Roundabout. Temporary traffic signals between 18.30 and 23.30. | 18 Apr | 21 Apr | 4 evenings |
| Private | Carhampton | Winsors Lane | Drainage work in relation to new development. Temporary road closure. | 14 Apr | 4 May | 3 weeks |
| Future | | | | | | |
| SCC | Williton | A39 Long Street | Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closures between 18.30 and 23.30. | 25 Apr | 29 Apr | 5 evenings |
| SCC | Williton | A358 High Street | Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closures between 18.30 and 23.30. | 3 May | 6 May | 4 evenings |
| SCC | Crowcombe | Roebuck Gate Lane | Drainage work. Temporary road closure. | 3 May | 23 May | 3 weeks |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|--|-------|--------|---------|
| SCC | Bicknoller | A358 Thorncombe Corner | Drainage work. Temporary traffic signals. | 9 May | 20 May | 2 weeks |
| SCC | Withycombe | Rattle Row | Drainage work. Temporary road closure. | 9 May | 13 May | 5 days |
| Other | | | | | | |
| SCC | West Somerset | Various | Additional "Deep Cleanse" jetting, full cut back, ploughing and grip clearing. | | | |
| | | | | | | |

7) Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

James Guscott attended from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and gave the following update.

Operational News for Community information relevant to the areas covered by area panel meeting:

Since the last area panel meeting held in January and this report being compiled, Minehead crews have attended forty one operational calls. These have included ten Road Traffic Collisions, eight property fires of which have been accidental causes or electrical related, one vehicle fire, three special service calls to assist other agencies, a reported Hazardous Materials Incident and three Chimney fires.

Crews also attended fires in the open that were unattended or poorly controlled bonfires spreading to other property or land. Crews have also attended a number of domestic smoke alarm calls and calls made with good intent that did not require our attendance.

• **Community Safety news and activities within the areas covered by the relevant area panel meeting:**

Since the last area panel meeting, community safety work has been carried out at various events in and around Minehead.

These have included:

- Fire Safety Officers carrying out a number of Fire Safety Checks at local businesses including Licenced premises, Residential Care Homes and a selection of retail outlets.
- Any issues that have been identified have been recorded and dealt with either at a local level or by written advice and in a small number of instances via enforcement notices.

Crews have also started to raise awareness about our Home Fire Safety Check and Visit Service locally. **Please see below for full details:**

This will also include information drops at specific targeted address areas where there is likely to be an elderly or potentially vulnerable residency.

Minehead Fire Station Spring Community Fire Safety campaign.

FREE Home Fire Safety Checks and Visits

Did you know you are entitled to a **FREE Home Fire Safety Check** and may also be entitled to a **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit**?

Do you know or care for someone that may benefit from this service?

All residents that live within Devon or Somerset are entitled to call our **FREEPHONE** advice number and receive **FREE home safety advice**.

It will take no more than 5 minutes and you will be asked some simple questions that will help our advisor decide if you need a **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit**.

Home Fire Safety Visits, take around 30 minutes and are bespoke to suit the circumstances of the individuals and homes we visit.

If a Full **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit** is considered appropriate, it may also include fitting **FREE** smoke detectors or other equipment should you require them. You would also be offered all the advice you may need to make you safer in your home.

Visits are arranged to suit your circumstances and at times to suit you.

Calls can also be made on behalf of others that you care for, and arrangements made via a preferred third party contact.

If a visit is not considered appropriate following your telephone call, our team will ensure you are sent all the relevant **FREE advice and literature** to help you carry out the checks in your own home.

To receive the **FREE Home Fire Safety Check** and seek advice about a **FREE** Home Fire Safety Visit, please call **0800 05 02 999**.

Or Text info line: 078 00 00 2476

Further details can be found on our website at
www.dsfire.gov.uk/YourSafety/SafetyInTheHome

8) Public Conveniences Update

Cllr Dewdney provided an update on public conveniences within the Dunster Area Panel area. To date there has been good engagement with the Parish Councils and Working Groups have been set up. Surveys are currently being undertaken to check the general conditions of the toilets in question. These surveys are to include water management.

WSC are looking to transfer the freehold of the toilets to Parish Councils, with some Parish Councils wishing to set up charities.

9) West Somerset Council Report

Shirlene provided the following update to the Panel.

Homefinder Somerset System

Cllr Turner requested that the Homefinder Somerset System is raised with the Panel to request their help in raising the awareness of residents seeking housing in the West Somerset district of the importance of registering on our Homefinder web site.

The Homefinder Somerset System (HFS) is how the majority of Social Housing is allocated across the whole of Somerset – (West Somerset Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, South Somerset District Council, Mendip District Council and Sedgemoor District Council). There is a common

allocations policy and application form. Access is via www.homefindersomerset.co.uk.

Potential applicants are encouraged to register on-line for a variety of reasons. The website hosts mutual exchanges for existing tenants, applications for renting garages, information on new build schemes coming up, and shared ownership and general housing advice. Annual renewals are also primarily done on-line.

Once a person is registered the onus is on the applicant to check the Homefinder Somerset Website on a weekly basis, as properties are often only advertised for one lettings/bidding cycle– midnight Tuesday to midnight Sunday.

It doesn't matter at what time during the lettings/ bidding cycle -(also known as "bids" / "expressions of interest" – as no money is involved in the "bidding" process) that bids are placed, as the property shortlist is not finalised until after close of cycle – and after any "Auto Bids" are placed at just after midnight.. Therefore a person can be the first on the list at 00.15 Wed am, but by midnight on Sunday down to the 20th place etc.

There is an urban myth that applicants are required to place three bids each week. This is untrue. Applicants are encouraged to only place bids where they have a real interest in moving to, and often the time between a successful bid and a tenancy start date can sometimes be a matter of days.

The administration of the Housing Register is the responsibility of each individual Local Authority, and the processing of an application is done by the Local Authority that the applicant resides in. The shortlisting and decision on who is allocated a vacancy is the Landlord role. They should be allocating in accordance with the Homefinder Somerset policy (and any Sec 106 agreements or local lettings policy – in the Exmoor National Parks there are stipulations for how long a person will have resided within that area to be allocated a tenancy).

People are encouraged to apply if they are in any form of housing need, they can be tenants or owner occupiers, but income and capital can affect the "band" that they are placed in.

The bands are Bronze, Silver and Gold – Gold being the highest, but an applicant doesn't have to be in Gold band to be rehoused, as allocation can be affected by the age of a person, and/ or type and location of the property. Although shortlists are prioritised that the applicant who has been in the highest band for the longest period of time should come top.

It is best that someone applies to join the register as soon as there is any housing need, as it can take some time to process an application, and not to wait until they hear of a property becoming vacant. Often properties are advertised whilst the previous tenant is still in situ, and potential applicants can miss the opportunity to bid if not already active on the Register.

For residents in the West Somerset area, who may not have access to the internet, they can complete a paper application form. They can also be placed on Auto bid. There is also a telephone Property Hotline and separate Bidding Line – charged at local rates (housingemailaccount@westsomerset.gov.uk or tel 01643 703704). We do encourage family members/support workers to use the website and place bids for vulnerable applicants to avoid them missing a suitable property as Auto bid has limitations. Staff can also place bids on request.

A weekly newsletter is kept in the Williton and Minehead office and e-mailed to all the Parish Councillors, (where we have correct e-mail details), and a variety of other support groups in the area.

Leaflets were available to take away which provided further information about how applicants can apply to Homefinders.

Update on Police and Crime Commissioners Election

Bruce Lang, the Monitoring Officer, requested that a reminder is given to the Panel regarding the Police and Crime Commissioners Election taking place on Thursday 5 May 2016. If you wish to vote you need to ensure that you are registered. This can be done online at www.avonpccelection2016.org.uk/register-to-vote.

Further information can be obtained on the News Release dated 30 March 2016. Hard copies were available at the end of the meeting.

West Somerset Council Financial Position

Shirlene updated the Panel on West Somerset Council's financial position. Shirlene explained that WSC would be looking at various transformation options over the next three months. The options are:-

- Continuing the current partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council
- The option of a merger with other Councils
- An option of the Council standing on its own
- WSC and TDBC having different transformation agendas

10) Any Other Business

Cllr Marilyn Crothers mentioned that she has recently received a leaflet regarding the cost of a Changing a House name. A discussion took place regarding whether a fee would be applicable if an owner wished to revert back to a property's previous name.

11) Dates of Future Meetings

The Chair gave out the dates of the future meetings.

25 July 2016 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Williton

4 October 2016 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Williton

23 January 2017 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Williton

18 April 2017 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Williton