

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of meeting held on 20 June 2012 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Minehead

Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Member of the Public
Adrian Dyer	West Somerset Council
Cllr David Sanders	West Somerset Council
Cllr Richard Lillis	West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Maureen Smith	West Somerset Council/Transition Minehead & Alcombe
Sue Sanders	Minehead Town Council
PS Tom Mayberry	Avon & Somerset Police
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
Graham Sizer	Minehead Development Trust/Minehead Chamber of Commerce
Anne Clarke	Manor Road Neighbour Watch Co-ordinator
Clara Lawrie	About My Area website
Ken Sims	Member of the Public
Meigan Lyons	Member of the Public
Dave Voisy	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 thanked everybody for attending. Everyone introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ron Bridle (Minehead Town Council), Penny Dobbin (Church of England), Cllr Paul Grierson (Minehead Town Council/West Somerset Council), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), Sue Lloyd, Paul Rushforth (Minehead Middle School), Cllr Val Welch (Minehead Town Council)

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Maureen Smith didn't have a query as such, but wished to raise awareness of the bids being put in tomorrow by Engage West Somerset on behalf of a number of organisations in West Somerset to 'Communities Living Sustainably' for a total of £10m (10 bids @ £1 million each). They should find out in early September 2012 whether they had been successful.

A number of issues were then raised as follows:

(a) *Graham Sizer was concerned that last week (week commencing 15 June) that drainage works in Washford had caused traffic tailbacks as far back as Tropiquaria, yet there had been no advance notice of such works in the local press.*

David Peake advised that this work was quick moving work and as such did not require advertising.

(b) *Ken Sims expressed concern regarding the traffic lights at Dunster Steep (A39/A396) and why they were set to give priority to vehicles from Dunster when*

there were no vehicles waiting or approaching the lights. The lights were beginning to be ignored by drivers which could be dangerous.

David replied that this was a safety issue. The lights were demand-sensored, but had to allow for vehicles which would be too light to trigger demand, such as cyclists, and that both sets of traffic lights should not be 'on red' at the same time. Tom Mayberry stated that any drivers found ignoring the lights by the Police would be dealt with severely.

(c) Meigan Lyons expressed her dismay regarding the long uncut 3ft high grass in Whitegate Close, which meant that when exiting her driveway she could not see people crossing the road.

David Peake explained that the grass used to be cut by West Somerset Council and Minehead Town Council and that Somerset County Council would contribute to this where highway safety was concerned. However, with recent problems of financial resources the District Council had withdrawn from providing this service. The County Council would maintain the grass where not to could be detrimental to highway safety – Seaward Way, Bircham Road, etc. and were looking at other areas including Whitegate Close. Unfortunately, the budgets for grass cutting had been greatly reduced.

David Sanders made the point that the money received by West Somerset Council from Somerset County Council for cutting the grass on the County Council's behalf had never covered the actual cost of the work.

2. **Arrangement of meeting with the Somerset GP Out of Hours Service provided by South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust and the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**

Sandra explained that the issue of out of hours emergency cover had been raised initially one year ago by Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker. A reply had now been received from NHS Somerset regarding representatives from the above organisations meeting with the Minehead Area Panel and in this respect they would be invited to the next Minehead Area Panel meeting on 12 September. Sandra emphasised that this would be an important meeting and an opportunity for the community to ask questions about local medical services. As such a well attended meeting was essential and she encouraged those present to circulate the news of the September meeting. Maureen Smith suggested that an article be put in the West Somerset Free Press. Sandra agreed, although pointed out that the Free Press may not print it: she had sent in a letter regarding today's Panel meeting but this had not been published.

Sandra further advised that West Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committee were also concerned about the current level of medical provision and wanted the NHS representatives to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, rather than a Minehead Area Panel meeting, to which 4 or 5 Panel members could be co-opted so that they could take part in the debate. However, the feeling amongst the Panel was that the NHS representatives should be invited to the Panel meeting in September and Scrutiny Committee members would be welcome to attend, or they could arrange their own meeting.

In order to collate questions to be asked prior to the meeting, Sandra asked that any queries/issues be sent to Sarah.

ACTION: Any issues to be raised, questions, etc. to be put to the representatives of the South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust and

the Somerset NHS Partnership Foundation Trust to be sent to Sarah Wilsher on email: swwilsher@westsomerset.gov.uk or tel. no. 01984 635296.

Meigan Lyons suggested that Dr Edward Ford of Irnham Lodge Surgery be invited to the meeting and Clara Lawrie suggested local pharmacies also be invited.

ACTION: Sandra/Sarah to contact Dr Ford and the pharmacies and put a letter in the West Somerset Free Press.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2012**

Matter of Accuracy

David Sanders expressed concern with the results of actions taken being recorded in the minutes as it made it difficult to assess accuracy and suggested a separate sheet for 'updates'.

Sandra responded by saying that the 'updates' were included in the minutes in italics so that they stood out from the actual minutes. Also as the Panel meetings were not 'proper' Council meetings she did not think the addition of updated information was a problem.

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

Matters Arising

Item 2 – Alcombe Christian Spiritualist Church and problems with parking and congestion in the Manor Road area: Sue Sanders advised that Cllr Paul Grierson passed his thanks to Sarah for her input into this issue. Anne Clarke informed the meeting that it did appear that the Church parishioners were car sharing and she agreed with Richard Newby, Traffic Engineer with the West Somerset Highways Area Office, that yellow lines would only move the parking problem and not solve it.

Item 7 - Minehead Visioning Group's list of projects: David Sanders advised the meeting of the following:

- The Regal Theatre's request for funding to enable the Lift Project to be completed would go to West Somerset Council's meeting on 27 June where Members would consider Cabinet's recommendation to approve a sum of up to £50,000 from the Seaside Strategy Funding pot.
- The new directional finger posts were in place and the interpretation signs had been positioned in the car parks.
- Planning permission had been applied for in respect of the new signage for the Enterprise Park.
- New bench seating had been installed along The Esplanade.

Item 8 – District Council Update: David further reported the following:

- Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) had commenced on 11 June 2012 with an initial week's grace from fines and running properly from 18 June. The on-street parking was now enforced by Somerset County Council through their contractors, CSL.

Item 9 – Minehead Development Trust: David added that:

- The Minehead Tourist Information Centre was now open in The Avenue.

5. Strategic Vision for Minehead – an update

Unfortunately, due to Brenda Maitland-Walker's absence there was no report for this agenda item. However, it was noted that the next meeting of the Minehead Visioning Group was scheduled for 6 July 2012.

6. Minehead Development Trust – an update

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

Minehead Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

Since the last Minehead Area Panel meeting the new TIC had opened in The Avenue on 4 May 2012. It had a bright, friendly atmosphere. Together Minehead Events Committee and the Chamber of Commerce were delivering their ideas and filling up the shelves. Minehead Development Trust (MDT) would like to publicly thank the following:

- West Somerset Council and Minehead Town Council for transitional funding, help and advice.
- LARC for funding the set up costs.
- Businesses for their advice, equipment, etc.

The TIC successfully showed the strength of the alliance between the public, private and voluntary sectors. It was also in a good location for both visitors and the community. MDT's long term objective was to move the TIC into the old hospital, together with the library and add a museum. In this respect a bid to the Heritage Lottery was being worked on, including conservation statements and educational reports being drawn up. Seaside Strategy funding had been allocated to progress the bid.

Unfortunately, the price of the old hospital was higher than MDT's independent valuation and talking to the owners of the old hospital, Somerset PCT, was proving difficult, particularly with the PCT due to be dissolved by this time next year. Pledges and interest from the community towards the project were welcomed.

7. Police Report

Tom Mayberry reported that there had been 346 crimes within the sector up to 12 June 2012, which meant 13% fewer victims of crime than this time last year. The detection rate was 29.2%. Butlins Adult Weekends remained a priority.

Recent arrests had been made in connection to non-dwelling burglaries. These tended to be made by people who had travelled into the area from outside.

8. Highway Matters

David Peake reported the following:

Completed Highway Works:

Footway repairs along The Parade, Minehead
Carriageway resurfacing along Bircham Road, Minehead
Carriageway resurfacing at Headon Cross (A39)
Carriageway resurfacing along the steep section at the eastern end of West Street, Minehead
Carriageway resurfacing along Dugdale Street, Minehead
Carriageway resurfacing along Cherfield, Minehead
Retaining wall repairs at Vicarage Road, Minehead
Installation of dropped kerbs at Sainsbury Road, Minehead

The Olympic Torch Relay had successfully passed from County Gate to Crowcombe, via Minehead, Dunster, Carhampton, Washford and Williton on 21 May.

Future Highway Works:

Carriageway resurfacing on the A396 between Dunster Steep and Luttrell Arms Corner with temporary road closures between 6.30pm and 11.30pm on 25 and 26 June.

Carriageway resurfacing and drainage works on the A358 from Crowcombe Bridge to Crowcombe by-pass with temporary road closures between 7pm on 3 July to 7am on 4 July.

As part of the Local Transport Plan a Traffic Regulation Order had been advertised for waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the junction of Paganel Road and Cher. Representations had been received and as a result the proposal had been modified to just restricting waiting for ten metres either side of all four corners. Consultation had taken place on the revised scheme and as no objections had been received the Determination Report had been sent to the County Council Traffic Manager and approved. The double yellow 'no waiting' lines had now been installed.

David advised that a carriageway surface dressing programme was currently being compiled for 2013 and asked the Panel for any suggestions for consideration.

ACTION: Panel members to contact David Peake with any suggestions of roads to be considered for inclusion in the 2013 carriageway surface dressing programme. This can be done via Sarah on email: swwilsher@westsomerset.gov.uk or tel: 01984 635296

David reported that CPE had commenced on 11 June 2012. Ken Sims asked if any comments had been made to Highways, but David replied that no responses had yet been received as it was early days. Adrian Dyer advised that West Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committee would be requesting a progress report in October when CPE had had time to 'bed in'.

Adrian also explained to the meeting that although West Somerset Council had been given the opportunity to join the CPE enforcement partnership for both off-street and on-street parking, this had not stacked up financially so the district council was continuing to enforce car parking in district owned car parks. The new traffic wardens were dressed in maroon, whereas the car park wardens were dressed in green.

9. Burning Issues

Unfortunately, due to the absence of any representatives from the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service there was no report for this agenda item.

10. Town Council Update

Sue Sanders reported the following:

- She had been working with Nicki McLean and Corrine Matthews from the District Council regarding the Minehead Town Trails being made available on the Minehead Town App, which would be available via car park interpretation signs, and the Visit Exmoor website.
- Assistance was being given towards the Heritage Lottery bid for Blenheim Gardens.

- A car park for the allotment at Periton Way was being created, paid for with Section 106 monies (ie, monies secured from developers as a result of legal agreements attached to certain planning permissions).
- The creation of a community orchard was being proposed on part of the allotments behind Harepark Terrace, off Hopcott Road. A lot of people consulted over the Jubilee celebrations period had been in favour of such a project. Maureen Smith added that Transition Minehead and Alcombe wished the scheme to be developed on a 'forest garden' basis with fruit trees above and undergrowth below. Carol Stone had been undertaking a course on forest gardens. It was hoped to produce as much fruit as possible and for the Somerset Community Food Group to run apple pressing and cider making sessions, similar to those already undertaken in Porlock and Carhampton.
- The flowers and flower baskets had been put on display for the summer and remaining baskets donated to St Andrews Church where they had been put on the outside railings along Friday Street.
- New seats had been installed at Cross Farm Park play area, to go with the new equipment installed a few years ago.
- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor had helped with marshalling for the Olympic Torch Relay.
- She would be meeting David Peake on 22 June regarding grass cutting areas and identifying who owned which areas. Maureen Smith advised that the District Council's Environment Policy Advisory Group had asked about the ownership of land and would be looking at this at their next meeting. David Peake emphasised what he had said earlier in the meeting under Agenda Item 2(c) – Somerset County Council did not have a duty to cut the grass, but did have the duty to maintain the highway, which meant cutting certain areas of grass for safety reasons.
- The gates at the entrance of Irnham Road park were to be repaired. Quotes had been obtained from two local blacksmiths.
- Commonwealth flags had been purchased for parts of the town centre for the Olympic Torch Relay, Diamond Jubilee celebrations and Olympic Games.
- There were currently four Member vacancies on Minehead Town Council. There had been five, but one person had been elected unopposed in March. There were two vacancies in the Central Ward, one in the North Ward and one in the South Ward. Elections for two of the vacancies would be held on 19 July 2012 and the remaining two would be elected in August 2012.

11. **District Council Update**

Adrian Dyer reported the following:

- The Council were seeking expressions of interest for the former Visitor Information and Interpretation Centre (VIIC). There were extreme Covenants on the building and they were talking to Prowting Homes and Butlins to see if any could be removed in order to encourage more expressions of interest. At present it could not be used as a café, amusement arcade or retail unit. Community use rather than commercial use was allowed. The West Somerset Community College had expressed interest in using it as a remote training centre.
- CPE had been introduced on 11 June 2012.
- Twelve of the 18 new benches had been installed on the seafront. They were made of recycled plastic with aluminium frames.
- A partnership bid was being made to the Heritage Lottery for £1.3 million for Blenheim Gardens and the old Clanville nurse. The pre-application bid had been accepted. The Friends of Blenheim Gardens now needed to be set up and to this end consultation questionnaires on the project included a section on whether you would be interested in becoming a Friend of Blenheim Gardens. These questionnaires were available from the Tourist Information Centre,

Minehead Customer Centre on Summerland Road and Blenheim Gardens Café and was available on-line:

<http://www.westsomerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/BlenheimGardens/consultationHome>

- Forty-three of the 67 lighting columns along The Esplanade were out of action due to sea water leaking into the pole/column and causing the lights to fuse. Also as four/five lighting columns were linked together problems with one light caused a few to fail at the same time. The lighting columns originated from Spain but a French company had been found who could supply new tops for the columns/poles, but it was imperative that the tops were watertight to prevent the problems from recurring. The new parts also had to be affordable.
- Minor dredging work was taking place at Minehead Harbour from 18 to 20 June.
- Town centre fingerposts and car park interpretation signs had recently been installed by Active Signs. A planning application had been submitted for the new Minehead Enterprise Park signage and would be determined by the Planning Committee. If approved the signs would be erected in August.
- In mid-May final testing of the Minehead Town App took place. The Minehead Town Trails would be publicly made available on this App and also via the Visit Exmoor website at the end of June, and the App would be made available to businesses, to enable them to maintain their own business information, in July. Minehead shops would be asked to display posters with the QR code displayed on them and the car park interpretation signs included the QR code too.
- Clanville nursery had been visited by District Councillors on 20 June. The Council was storing a Victorian greenhouse at present. Angela Lamplough was requesting old photos of Blenheim Gardens, Clanville nursery, etc. which could be used in the bid to the Heritage Lottery. Maureen Smith added that the bid for Blenheim Gardens was based on an objective of making the Gardens a 'green park' and used for training and education purposes. The bid also included the refurbishment of the bandstand and linked with the old hospital.

12. County Council Update

Unfortunately, due to the absence of Brenda Maitland-Walker there was no report for this agenda item.

13. Any Other Business

Licensed Premises

Sandra reported that Kay O'Sullivan, Licensing Officer for West Somerset Council, had requested that any complaints about licensed premises be sent by email or in writing to the Licensing Unit so that a picture could be built up of what was happening. In this regard please email envhealth@westsomerset.gov.uk or write to Kay O'Sullivan, Licensing Officer, West Somerset Council, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA.

EDF Futures Leaflet

Sandra advised that a copy of this leaflet had been sent to the Minehead Area Panel and was available for viewing. Adrian reported that EDF Energy had appointed a French company, Bouygues TP with Laing O'Rourke as their preferred contractors for the site preparation works. The cost of the contract was jointly £2 billion. Phase two of the site preparation works should have commenced in August but had been delayed due to the discovery of asbestos throughout the site. In December 2012/January 2013 the Board in France would decide whether the reactors should be built, if planning approval had been obtained.

Butlins Summer Festival

This would be held on 15 August 2012 and would be paid for by Butlins, with limited support from West Somerset Council. There would be stalls along the seafront, the Red Devils and the Memorial Flight, etc. but the Red Arrows would not be performing this year.

14. Date & Venue of Future Meetings

Future meetings to be held on:

Wednesday 12 September 2012 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe

Wednesday 12 December 2012 at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe
Wednesday, 13 March 2013