

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Thursday 20 June 2013
Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)
R Webber, Cutcombe PC
M Rawle, Dulverton TC
M de Wynter Smith, Exmoor PC
D Powell, Luxborough PC
A Palmer, Porlock PC
S Oliver, Timberscombe PC
P Griffin, Wootton Courtenay PC
D Peake and K Harwood, SCC Highways
K Turner, WSC
PCSOs L Brooks and K Williams, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Inspector S Carey, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
F Gabb and R Manicom, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
R Coyne, Dulverton TC
A Vigers, Exmoor PC
I Gummer, Luxborough PC
A Powell, Luxborough PC
G Hughes, Skilgate Parish
J Parsons, Timberscombe PC
F Nicholson, SCC
B Heywood, WSC
B Lang, WSC

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 R Simons, Cutcombe PC; N Thwaites, Dulverton TC; B Foster, Selworthy and Minehead Without PC; Cllr K Mills and Cllr K J Ross, WSC, T Saunders, ENPA and J Edwards.

2 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues (Part 1)

- 2.1 In the absence of Tessa Saunders and with Councillor Webber due to leave the meeting early, Councillor Webber was invited to contribute.
- 2.2 Councillor Webber reminded parishes that the National Park Local Plan would be going out for consultation later in the year and urged everyone to participate in this process.
- 2.3 Councillor Turner confirmed that the West Somerset Council Local Plan was being discussed at a meeting of the Council next week and hopefully would be going out for consultation in July, August and September 2013.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 March 2013 and Matters Arising

- 3.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 3.2 Bruce Lang reported that consultation response had been submitted as requested in paragraph 5.8 with all parishes and the local MP also being encouraged to participate as referred to in 5.9.
- 3.3 The possibility of inviting a representative from the Ambulance Service to attend a future Panel meeting was still on going.
- 3.4 In regard to paragraph 6.1, the Chairman reported that Inspector Lisa Simpson had wrote to him apologising for not being able to attend the previous meeting and

indicating that she was moving on to a new role and that her replacement would hopefully arrange for attendance at future meetings.

- 3.5 In terms of flooding issues, a report from the county-wide Flooding Summit was due to come out shortly with the intention of a response being prepared before the end of the year. The County Councillor stated that as part of the discussions it had been recognised that the biggest danger to life in terms of flooding in the county were flash floods in the Exmoor area.
- 3.6 In terms of the proposed emergency diversionary routes, various comments were made indicating that there was still much concern and dissatisfaction with some of the proposals. The County Councillor encouraged all parishes to let the Highways Authority know of what information signs they would wish to be erected in their parishes should road closures be necessary. Karin Harwood of SCC Highways explained that this was a very difficult issue to deal with from a practical point of view and asked parishes to give the Highways Authority as much advance notice of their wishes as possible. It was emphasised that any such additional signs would need to be funded from someone other than SCC.

4 The Future of Exmoor Area Panel Meetings

- 4.1 The Chairman explained that the future of Area Panel meetings in West Somerset as a whole had been discussed by the Corporate Policy Advisory Group of West Somerset Council. It had been agreed to place an item on the agendas of all of the four Panels to encourage discussion on how the Panels could best be used going forward particularly in regard to encourage higher attendance from parish councils. He invited views from around the table.
- 4.2 Representatives from Luxborough Parish Council indicated that they had found the panel meetings very useful and intended to continue attending. Representatives from Timberscombe Parish Council said that they found the meetings useful as well and particularly as it had proved very difficult to get local interest for people to attend their own parish council meetings.
- 4.3 Councillor Turner reflected that the Exmoor Panel covered a very large geographical area and some parishes could feel themselves quite peripheral to the main discussions. He did suggest that one topic going forward would be to bring issues relating to the new Health and Wellbeing Board for discussion at Panel meetings.
- 4.4 An email had been received from Brompton Ralph Parish Council which suggested that the purpose and scope of the Panel meetings could perhaps be broadened to create more interest. They considered that the opportunity to meet with the local police was particularly useful and perhaps issues regarding housing and footpaths would be of interest for discussion at some stage in the future.
- 4.5 Representatives from Dulverton Town Council made the point that the more parishes that attended the more interesting and useful the Panel meetings would be.
- 4.6 The Chairman reminded those present that with the new County Council Division of Exmoor being extended geographically the Panel had an even more crucial role in helping the County Councillor keep in touch with her parishes and vice versa. The Chairman also stressed that Panel meetings provided an opportunity for

parishes to put forward items for discussion. In this regard reference was made to the community's regret at the loss of a public swimming pool in the area. Another member suggested that perhaps parishes should work together in terms of attending Panel meetings and bringing up items of interest.

4.7 Highway issues were usually popular on the agenda and it was suggested that the minutes of the Panel meeting should include the Somerset County Council Highway email address and a direct link to their website. SCC website is www.somerset.gov.uk. SCC Area Highways Minehead e-mail is: countryroads-westsom@somerset.gov.uk. Telephone number for reporting potholes, blocked highway drains etc. is 08453459155.

4.8 The Chairman concluded by thanking all those who had contributed to the discussion and confirmed that the matters raised would be taken into account going forward.

5 Police Issues

5.1 Inspector Shane Carey together with PCSO Linda Brooks and PCSO Katherine Williams attended.

5.2 PCSO Williams reported that since the last meeting crime is down in the Panel area with detection being up. Over the last three months a summary of the crimes was as follows: 7 thefts, 2 assaults, 1 public order, 1 theft from motor vehicle, 1 criminal damage, 1 sexual offence and 1 dangerous dog out of control.

5.3 The Exmoor beat teams had been going out in the police community contact vehicle and visiting outlying villages giving crime prevention advice to members of the public visiting the many beauty spots in the area. The police intended to be at the Wimbleball Bike Festival that weekend and would be taking their mobile skate and bike ramp for use with the local youths. The police would also be arranging youth fun days in Dulverton and Brushford and be attending the Porlock Country Fair and Brompton Regis providing a police dog demonstration.

5.4 Inspector Carey then explained there had been some reorganisation of the police command structure in this part of the region. West Somerset was now part of a new district area covering from Weston, Yeovil, Taunton as well as the old Burnham/Bridgwater/Minehead local police area. The new Chief Superintendent in charge of this area was Nikki Watson.

5.5 In his view the new arrangements would have an advantage in giving the local area access to more resources and so hopefully the public would see more police in the local area.

5.6 In response to a question, the Inspector confirmed that resources were in place to deal with any criminal related activity arising from the badger cull.

6 Somerset County Council Highways Issues

6.1 Karin Harwood and David Peake were present for this item.

6.2 Mrs Nicholson, the Somerset County Councillor articulated particular concerns regarding service dressing, filling of potholes and the undertaking of other "less urgent" works.

- 6.3 Highways officers explained that there was a very complicated programme of surface dressing works and that they would be happy to respond to any particular questions from the community in relation to works in their area.
- 6.4 It was also confirmed that the tarmac used for pothole repairs in this area came from Henlade (and not Bristol which was an untrue “urban myth”).
- 6.5 It was also reported that there were 37 listed remedial works to be undertaken within the area such as the problem of loose chippings in Timbercombe which was raised by a member of the Panel.
- 6.6 Referring to an earlier item, the Highway officers offered to provide speakers at future meetings, for example, a specialist on safety works and their Street Works Manager.
- 6.7 Members of the Panel were also signposted to a website – roadworks.org – which provided live information of roadworks across the country.
- 6.8 Reference was also made to the fact that Peter Radford, their bridge engineer, had recently left the County Council which would be a sad loss.
- 6.9 Councillor Turner, once again, raised the issue of providing infilling material at Rooks Nest.
- 6.10 A further recurring issue was raised in regard to the section of road from Luckwell Bridge to Exford. Problems were still on going regarding overhanging trees and branches falling into the road and a view expressed that this section of road was in need of some surface dressing repairs. The Highway Officers confirmed that this road is not currently included in any works list.
- 6.11 One member of the Panel also complained that in his view some of the roadside grass cutting was not necessary.
- 6.12 Highway Officers offered to provide the web address for the Highway Safety Manual when it becomes available.

7 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Issues

- 7.1 The representatives of the Fire Service updated the Panel on recent incidents in the Panel area. There was some discussion concerning the provision of defibrillator training and Mr Gabb undertook to supply a contact address for the fire officer dealing with this, so that this could be circulated for the attention of parishes.

8 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues(Part 2)

- 8.1 There was a discussion concerning the ENPA's attitude to renewable energy projects inside the Park and within an impact distance of its boundary. The Chairman advised that on the whole the Park favoured small scale schemes that conform to the landscape and resisted larger developments.

9 Parish Lengthsman Scheme and Update

- 9.1 Margaret Rawle mentioned that the Dulverton Town Council Clerk who administers the Lengthsman Scheme has asked the Lengthsman to fill in his own worksheets and hand them to her direct in future. These worksheets are important for filing to enable records to be kept of the work done for each Authority. Some parishes have not been helpful in returning this information and it is very time consuming having to chase for it.
- 9.2 The intention is to review the operation of the scheme in July to plan changes for the following year. This will take place at the September Panel meeting.

10 Education Provision in the Panel Area

- 10.1 Mrs Nicholson advised the Panel of the possible reorganisation of education provision in the Panel area. There would be an information meeting for a representative of each parish concerned at the Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross on 1 July 2013.

11 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 3 September 2013 at 6.30pm (Warden's meeting) at Winsford Village Hall, main meeting commencing at 7pm
- 7 November 2013 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 23 January 2014 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 6 March 2014 at 7pm at Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

12 Items for Next Meeting

- It was hoped that other SCC Highways Officer(s) would attend to discuss their roles at the next meeting.
- Arising from a subsequent discussion with Mr Peake, there will also be an item at which he will bring maps of each parish in the Panel area which will show all of the services and features of which Highways are aware, so that parishes can take them away and add any features of which they are aware (for example, drains) which can then be embodied in the permanent record.
- TO THIS END, ALL PARISHES ARE REQUESTED TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE REPRESENTED.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm