

DUNSTER AREA PANEL MEETING

MONDAY 25 JULY 2016 AT 7.00PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WILLITON

NOTES OF THE MEETING

Attendees: Cllr Faye Barringer-Capp (Chair) Carhampton Parish Council
Cllr Philip Laramy, Carhampton Parish Council
Cllr Christine Oliver, Dunster Parish Council
Cllr Geoffrey Williams, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Phil Gannon, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Smith, Old Cleeve Parish Council
Steve Eggar, Roadwater Village Trust
Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP
Cllr Martin Dewdney, West Somerset Council
Cllr Brian Leaker, West Somerset Council
Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker, West Somerset Council
Bryan Stevens, Avon & Somerset Constabulary
David Peake, SCC Highways
Debbie Dennis, Community Council for Somerset
Shirlene Adam, Director – Operations, West Somerset Council
Eileen Ford, Executive Assistant, West Somerset Council

1) “Have Your Say” Community Issues

Cllr Maitland-Walker wished her thanks to be passed on with regards to the improvements recently made to the road surface on the A358. Cllr Maitland-Walker also requested a progress report on the road from the garage to the Post Office in Washford.

Cllr Smith raised the issue for the need for chevrons along Withycombe Straight. Mr Peake requested that Old Cleeve Parish Council write to the Traffic Engineer at Somerset County Council with their concerns.

A discussion took place regarding the recent traffic difficulties in and around the Watchet/Blue Anchor area because of a road traffic accident.

Cllr Maitland-Walker raised the issue of ragwort alongside the roadside. Mr Peake suggested that the reporting of ragwort should be directed by e-mail to the Highways Department at Somerset County Council. The question was raised of whether a member of the public could put ragwort into their garden waste. The advice from the Somerset Waste Partnership is that these weeds are best controlled on site, but small quantities from household sources can be taken to recycling centres. Heavy duty bags

should be used to transport weeds and Common Ragwort should be transported in sealed bags or containers. On arrival at site please tell the site staff that you have these types of weeds and they will direct you to the “cannot be recycled” skip.

2) Election of Chairman

Cllr Maitland proposed that Cllr Barringer-Capp continues as Chair for another year. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Leaker.

3) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Crothers of Nettlecombe Parish Council, Cllr Trollope-Bellew, Leader of West Somerset Council, Cllr Christine Lawrence, Somerset County Council, and Chris Jones, Devon and Somerset Fire Services.

4) Minutes of Meeting Held on 18 April 2016 and Matters Arising

The notes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016 were approved and there were no matters arising.

5) Somerset Micro-enterprise Project

Rhys Davies, Project Co-ordinator of Somerset Micro-enterprise Project was unable to attend. Eileen Ford agreed to contact Mr Davies to establish the reason and to arrange a further date for him to attend.

6) Police Report

Bryan Stevens attended the meeting and explained that the Police now recorded incidents in a different geographical area to the Dunster Area however that the number of incidents in respect of criminal damage and non-dwelling burglaries had dropped in comparison with the previous year's figures.

In respect of the Watchet and Williton area Bryan informed the Panel that again incidents of criminal damage and non-dwelling burglaries had reduced. Bryan advised that information on crime figures was available on Avon and Somerset website.

Cllr Dewdney asked for figures in respect of cyber-crime in the West Somerset and in the Taunton Deane area. Bryan gave examples of cyber-crime and agreed to forward this request to the relevant team.

Bryan confirmed that the Police still undertook a marking services for machinery and attended homes to provide advice on security free of charge.

Cllr Leaker informed the Panel that he was now a member of the Police Independent Advisory Group and encouraged that all crime is reported, however, small. Cllr Leaker suggested that Shane Carey be invited to attend a future Dunster Area Panel meeting. The Panel agreed that this was an excellent idea and Cllr Leaker agreed to extend an invitation.

The Chair raised a concern where she had recently had cause to contact the Police following a gentleman cold calling at her home selling household wares. The cold caller explained that he was an ex-convict from the Sheffield area and became confrontational when asked to leave. Bryan confirmed that the Police were aware of this type of cold callers within the area and advised to contact Police if behaviour was threatening.

A discussion took place regarding the traffic diversion put in place when the A358/A39 is closed because of an accident. The Police used to man strategic points of a diversion to ensure the traffic followed the diversion and flowed in a consistent manner. The current procedure is to put up folding road closure signs. The difficulty with this procedure is that drivers with local knowledge use short cuts to avoid the diversion, thereby causing traffic hold-ups on the smaller, narrower roads. Cllr Maitland-Walker suggested if a sign could be placed by the road closed sign providing information on where the accident/road closure had actually taken place to prevent locals using the diversion only to find they should have driven pass the road closure. Bryan confirmed that he would check to see if this suggestion was achievable.

7) Highways Report

David gave Karin's apologies for not attending the meeting and gave the following update:-

Planned Works in Dunster Panel Area
2016

West Somerset House, Williton 25 July

	Parish/Town	Location	Description	Start	Finish	Duration
Completed						
SCC	Dunster	Boniton Lane	Damage to bridge at Nutcombe Bottom.		Completed	
Private	Carhampton	Winsors Lane	Drainage work in relation to new development.		Completed	
SCC	Crowcombe	Roebuck Gate Lane	Drainage work.		Completed	
SCC	Bicknoller	A358 Thorncombe Corner, Halsway Hill	Drainage work		Completed	
SCC	Withycombe	Rattle Row	Repairs to Withycombe Ford.		Completed	
SCC	Huish Champflower	Clatworthy Road	Verge/embankment repairs.		Completed	
SCC	Old Cleeve	A39 Bilbrook & Washford	SCC Resilience Programme. Carriageway retexturing.		Completed	
SCC	Elworthy	B3224 Elworthy Barrows	SCC Resilience Programme. Carriageway retexturing.		Completed	
Ongoing						
Future						

SCC	West Quantoxhead	A39 Bridgwater Road, near Wibble Farm	Drainage work. Temp road closures at night. Carriageway resurfacing. Temp road closures at night.	Sept Oct	Sept Oct	2 nights 5 nights
SCC	Old Cleeve, Treborough & Luxborough	B3224	SCC Resilience Programme. Gully grating/frame strengthening.	Sept Oct	Sept Oct	
Other						
SCC	West Somerset	Various	Surface dressing programme.			

Cllr Oliver enquired after the old Victorian grating which had been replaced in Priory Green. The Dunster Museum would be interested in having this as part of their collection. David suggested Cllr Oliver contact Nick Wall. Nick owns a collection of highway memorabilia and there is a possibility that he may know what happened to this grating.

Cllr Gannon described to the Panel the various different colouring and lettering on street signs in and around the area. Concern was raised that recently contractors for the Council were replacing Victorian Street signs and Councillors wanted to know what was happening to these signs. Could they be returned or did the contractor take them for scrap? Shirlene agreed to look into this and come back with further information.

8) Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Apologies had been received from the Fire Rescue Services, but provided 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 April and this report being compiled on 18/07/16, Minehead crews have attended 35 operational calls. These have included 8 Road Traffic Collisions, 6 property fires of which have been accidental causes or electrical related and 3 vehicle fires.

Crews also attended fires in the open that were unattended or poorly controlled bonfires. 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 Garages and Workshops.
- The local community plan for the station has been published and preparations for a variety of community safety engagements are being planned.
- This includes a Thatch Fire Safety awareness campaign throughout August.

Efforts are continuing to be made 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**

9) West Somerset Council Report

- i) Shirlene updated the meeting and started with an update from Angela Summers regarding the Bridging the Gap Conference held on 28 June 2016.

The above conference had three speakers who clearly illustrated how parish/town councils could run very effective services which met the needs of their communities

Martock: <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/Pages/54/Martock-Parish-Council.html> Tracey Smith, Project Co-ordinator presented from Martock Parish Council, illustrating how Parish Councils can have a real impact in their communities, if they have the confidence to raise sufficient income through precept.

Ilfracombe: another project which demonstrated great partnership working was 'One Ilfracombe'. Their focus was to bring together all organisations in the town to operate as one. For more information, please visit: <http://www.oneilfracombe.org.uk/living-well-project/>

They have three stands within the partnership:

- 1) Health and wellbeing
- 2) Pride in the town
- 3) Economic and skills (linking with businesses with schools)

Their 7 driving principles are:

- 1) Understand the problems – knowing the community
- 2) Design services around people eg: 15/16 year olds teaching older people how to use computers.
- 3) Focus on prevention to reduce demand and cost.
- 4) Develop multi-agency approach with one central point of contact for all services.
- 5) Foster community responsibility and support volunteers to design and provide solutions – empowering residents.
- 6) Establish value for £ (they commissioned a nef report for their town)
- 7) Explore potential to deliver and commission services.

Frome Town Council: <http://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/> – people feel alienated from government but are interested in their street/local community.

Their 3 roles as Town Council:

- 1) Civic Leadership
- 2) Co-ordinators to make things happen – bringing the relevant people/organisations together.

3) Providers of Services

Finally, John Connell from DCLG was promoting the great case studies from parish/town council projects across England which could be found on: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/>

For all the presentations from the conference, please visit:

<http://somerstownsforum.org.uk/2016/06/29/bridging-the-gaps-in-health-wellbeing-conference-june-28th-bridgwater-2/>

ii) Work in respect of the transfer of public toilets continues to go well.

iii) **Transformation Project**

Shirlene then updated the Panel on the transformation project. Since Shirlene's last update in April a business plan had been prepared which gave three options for both West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council. These options were:-

- 1) Remain as two separate Councils, as currently, but undertake further transformation
- 2) Merge the two Council's and become one separate but new Council
- 3) The two Councils separate and the "One Team" for the management team and for staff is disbanded

The business plan has now been published and is available on both Council's websites for the public to view. The business plan had been positively assessed by the external assurance review. Options one and two would provide both Councils with savings for the future, with option two giving a larger saving. Option three would also give savings for TDBC, but for West Somerset Council it would mean only undertaking statutory duties only.

Cllr Gannon raised the issue, that in his opinion, option three was not actually a viable option. The management team of West Somerset Council had already been dismantled due to the past transformation of both Councils and would be difficult to reinstate. A better opinion would be a merger with three Councils eg Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Shirlene confirmed that engagement across all the Councils within Somerset had been taken place since the commencement of the transformation process and all Councils continued to be briefed on progress. West Somerset and Taunton Deane's business case had been tested and the figures do stack up

and both Council's would be happy to have discussions if other Councils wished to work alongside us.

Discussion took place regarding cross funding across the two Councils. Shirlene explained that option two would be one new Council covering the area of West Somerset and Taunton Deane. The new Council would have one pot of money in which to provide services.

Cllr Leaker raised the question that a three-way merger which included Sedgemoor would provide further savings and efficiencies. Shirlene reiterated that all Councils had been kept informed of our business case and if any Council wished to become part of this, both Councils would be happy to work with them.

10) Any Other Questions

Cllr Smith raised the issue Blue Anchor toilets. The residents of Blue Anchor remain concerned that their public toilets could be closed and asked if Blue Anchor could be given special dispensation. It was appreciated that Old Cleeve Parish Council was a tiny Council, with a small precept, and unable to fund the toilets themselves. It was hoped that a third party would come forward.

Cllr Leaker mentioned that in the continent the public paid a euro to use the toilet facilities and on leaving the equipment was self-sanitised. Shirlene agreed to pass this suggestion forward to Assets Management.

11) Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting is on 4 October 2016 at 7.00pm. Cllr Leaker gave his apologies as he would be on leave.

12) Ian Liddell-Grainger

At the end of the meeting the Chair asking Mr Liddell-Grainger if he had any comments to make.

Mr Liddell-Grainger began by announcing that there would soon be a media announcement on Hinkley Point. He was unable to provide any further information but confirmed that it would be good news.

The second issue he raised concerned the West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council business case. Mr Liddell-Grainger was of the opinion that TDBC's finances were a "very black hole and that they had no money". He was concerned that the two Council's would not be able to

deliver any further savings from transformation. This decision would affect all the constituents living in West Somerset and Mr Liddell-Grainger felt that that discussions needed to take place with Sedgemoor District Council. Mr Liddell-Grainger was aware that the Government had informed both Councils four years ago to investigate the possibility of a three-way merger and that the Councils needed to “live in the real world”. Mr Liddell-Grainger went on further to say that West Somerset had a tough time ahead for the next 30 years.

In respect of the recent scrutiny report Mr Liddell-Grainger was “not impressed” with the information provided within the report and had to write to the Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council, Cllr John Williams, with a Freedom of Information Request, in order to obtain further information. He further explained that the public’s views had not been consulted or taken into consideration and that the report was “vanity”. In Mr Liddell-Grainger’s reiterated his opinion that before an informed decision could be made both Leaders from West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council needed to have discussions with the Leader of Sedgemoor District Council.

Mr Liddell-Grainger also discussed the funding for the Somerset Rivers Authority. Mr Liddell-Grainger confirmed that work was still on-going with the Secretary of State and hoped that the legislation would soon go through.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm.