

Dunster Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 29 July 2013

at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

Present

Marilyn Crothers (Chairman); Faye Barringer-Capp (Carhampton PC); Ron Buckingham (Elworthy Parish Council); P Lyle, Margaret Smith (Old Cleeve Parish Council); John Fulwell (Withycombe Parish Council); Ian Liddell-Grainger MP; PCSOs Bryan Stevens and Katherine Williams (Avon & Somerset Constabulary); Chris Jones (Devon and Somerset Fire Service); David Peake (SCC Highways); Jim Kent (West Somerset Seniors Forum); Keith Turner (Brompton Ralph PC and WSC), Cllr M Dewdney, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr E May, Bruce Lang (WSC);

1. “Have Your Say” – Community Issues

- (a) Jim Kent raised the fact that there was a select committee considering the issue of transport in rural areas which he believed was requesting representations by 2 September 2013 and it was agreed that Jim would email the details to Bruce Lang who would circulate to all the parishes in the Dunster Panel area.
- (b) Mrs Lyle of Old Cleeve raised concerns in relation to road safety in the vicinity of Walnut Tree corner in Washford; particularly overgrown vegetation/foilage, the need for new signs and the desirability of introducing slower speed limits. It was agreed that David Peake of Somerset Highways would take these concerns into consideration.
- (c) Margaret Smith of Old Cleeve circulated photographs of a new opening onto the A39 near Washford. She was concerned that there was obviously some development taking place and that the Old Cleeve Parish Council had not been informed of what was happening. Bruce Lang agreed to raise the issue with the planning department at West Somerset Council and report back to the Old Cleeve Parish Council.
- (d) Margaret Smith raised an issue regarding an individual who had been causing constant concern due to their behaviour. The police representatives at the meeting confirmed that the said individual was known to them and that they were doing all that they could although in some instances effective action was limited without the cooperation of the individual.

2. Election of Chairman

Agreed (1) that Councillor Marilyn Crothers be elected as Chairman of the Dunster Panel for the remainder of 2013.

Agreed (2) that with effect from 2014 Councillor Anthony Trollope-Bellew be Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Eggar (Roadwater Village Trust) and Somerset County Councillor Christine Lawrence.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 April 2013 and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 April 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

In response to a question, David Peake confirmed that the issue of fallen trees on the roadside in Elworthy was still ongoing and members of the Panel urged this matter to be actioned quickly.

Bruce Lang confirmed that a new warning sign had been erected by West Somerset Council on the Blue Anchor slipway making it clear to the public that it could be dangerous to walk down onto the beach in this vicinity.

5. Police Report

PCSO Bryan Stevens and PCSO Katherine Williams reported that there had been a broad breadth of incidents over the last few months. They particularly brought to the Panel's attention:

- (a) a spate of criminal damage to motor vehicles although the majority of cases occurred in one incident in Dunster;
- (b) three dwelling burglaries with two occurring in one night in Withycombe;
- (c) the sad loss of Sergeant Tom Mayberry, an extremely well respected policeman, who had passed away just shortly before his retirement; at this stage it was not sure how his post would be replaced.

In response to a concern regarding dogs being allowed to run in fields off leads and causing damage to livestock, the police representatives took away the suggestion of raising the profile of this issue to the public particularly in respect of the ultimate sanction that farmers had within their rights to destroy an animal that was considered to be threatening their livestock.

It was also confirmed that to date PC Nick Wood had not been replaced.

6. Highways Report

David Peake reported on the current and proposed works in the Dunster Panel area – as set out in the attached Appendix A.

He made particular reference to the recent Ironman event that had been held on 16 June 2013 and asked for any feedback in regard to how the road closures had worked. A member of the Panel did say that some people felt that the road closures had operated over too long a period and David explained that this had been done to help with the control of the participants and spectators to keep cyclists and motor vehicles clear from each other particularly on the narrow lanes.

David also confirmed that plans were already in hand for next year's Ironman event to be held on 15 June 2014.

Councillor Trollope-Bellew warned that he was aware that Wessex Water were undertaking sewage works in Crowcombe that could conflict with proposed highway works in the parish.

Old Cleeve Parish Council had listed six matters of concern that were handed to Mr Peake in writing.

David reminded Panel members of the County Council's project regarding emergency diversion routes and encouraged people to research the issue of the SCC Highways website - www.somerset.gov.uk

Councillor Faye Barringer-Capp advised that the cycle path between Dunster and Minehead needed clearance and David confirmed that this was going to be done before the Dunster Show in August.

In response to a question, David confirmed that the proposed access design for the proposed new doctors surgery at Dunster was a planning issue being dealt with by the Exmoor National Park Authority.

Various pothole repair requests were submitted to David and Councillor Dewdney extended thanks on behalf of the local community for the efficient road surfacing work that had been undertaken during the recent weeks.

Finally, David encouraged anyone to let him know of any ragwort that needed removing.

7. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Chris Jones reported that since the end of April over 70 call outs had occurred in the Minehead fire station area. No cases of deliberately lighted fires have been reported over this period.

Fire fighters had visited the Danesfield and Minehead Middle Schools as part of the "Focus on Fire" initiative and had worked with 15 and 16 year olds at West Somerset Community College on the "Too Soon to Die" road safety initiative.

The fire service would be part of a multi-agency presence at Dunster Show with a focus on road and farm safety.

Chris confirmed that home fire safety visits were still being undertaken and promoted a special event to provide support for older drivers that was due to be held on 5 September 2013 between 10am and 1pm at the Brompton Regis Village Hall.

Chris concluded by providing a summary of the financial cuts that were being made to the fire service over the next two to three years. For further information refer to attached Appendix B.

8. The Future of Dunster Area Panel Meetings

Bruce Lang reported that West Somerset Council's Corporate Policy Advisory Group were undertaking a review of the Area Panels and had requested all Panels to consider the issue of encouraging improved attendance.

It was considered that it would be beneficial if one-off presentations on matters of interest could be suggested to encourage greater attendance. It was agreed that a more personal email invitation be sent to all parish councils inviting them to nominate a representative from their parish/town council to attend the Panel and suggest any ideas for discussion topics. Attendees would also be encouraged to make a written list of any detailed points that they wished raised, particularly with Somerset County Council Highways department, so that they could be handed to the representative at the meeting to enable discussions to focus on more strategic issues.

9. West Somerset Council Report

Bruce Lang confirmed that at the meetings of the West Somerset and Taunton Deane Councils held in the previous week the principle of sharing a Chief Executive had been approved.

It has also been agreed that the current Taunton Deane Borough Council Chief Executive be appointed to the new joint Chief Executive post with effect from an agreed

date in October 2013 with the current Chief Executive of West Somerset Council remaining in employment until 31 March 2014 to help ensure a smooth handover.

It was explained that the intention was that this new joint Chief Executive post was important for a step towards the proposed partnership project. The next key stage would be for both Councils to consider a detailed business case for shared joint management and shared services in October 2013.

Bruce also made reference to the recent Government announcement of a community benefit package which could be in the region of £128 million or around £3 million a year for 40 years to benefit the host communities for when the new power plant started operating. He confirmed that it was still not clear on when the commencement of operation date would be as issues such as the strike price and confirmation of financial backing for the project was still to be resolved in detail.

Councillor Keith Turner advised the Panel that an important consultation process on the draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 in respect of the revised Preferred Strategy had commenced today and would run until Monday 23 September 2013. Keith encouraged as many parishes as possible to contribute to this process.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

14 October 2013 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

27 January 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

7 April 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.