

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 14 September 2016 **at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Quarry Close, Alcombe**

Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Resident
James Barrah	Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council
Paul Ramsay-Read	Town Watch Radio Scheme
Julian Luke	Minehead museum
Ron Blundell	Resident & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road
Diane Partridge	Resident
Bridget O'Brien	Resident
P Johnson	Resident
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised to the speakers for the poor attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Jerry Burge (Resident), Cllr Andy Hadley (West Somerset Council), Cath Isherwood (Resident), Colin Isherwood (Resident), Chris Jones (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service), Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), Cllr Jean Parbrook (Minehead Town Council and West Somerset Council), David Peake (Somerset County Council Area Highways), Elaine Ross (Resident), Doug Ross (Resident), PC Joseph Sanderson (Avon & Somerset Police), Cllr Terry Venner (West Somerset Council and Somerset County Council).

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

(a) Diane Partridge expressed her concern regarding possible Winter flooding in Alcombe at the bottom end of Manor Road and Combeland Road close to the Britannia Inn which was caused by debris and overgrowth building up at the edge of the stream and the stream overflowing. The 'sheepwash' at the junction of Staunton Lane and Manor Road used to be cleared to prevent flooding and Diane requested that it be cleared again.

Christine Lawrence advised that the stream had been cleared about 2 years ago by Somerset County Council (SCC) and residents but acknowledged that the debris from the stream had been left on the road, which had not helped the flooding problem. Christine advised the Panel to write to David Peake asking if the stream could be cleared again.

ACTION: Sandra to write to David Peake at SCC to ask if the stream in Alcombe could be cleared again.

James Barrah added that Veolia were responsible for clearing the roads on behalf of the District Council and that once the debris had been removed from the stream Veolia could clear it away.

A resident advised that the gutter at the junction of Warden Road and Alexandra Road often became full of leaves and debris after heavy rain and asked if it could also be cleared.

ACTION: Sandra to write to David Peake at SCC to ask if the gutter at the junction of Warden Road and Alexandra Road could be cleared.

The resident also advised that the street name sign for Warden Road, which had been located outside no. 1, had disappeared.

2. Opportunities for Our Young People – Dave Jackson, South Coast YMCA

Dave Jackson explained that he was the Operational Director of the South Coast YMCA which included the Beach Hotel and Prospect House in Minehead. The South Coast YMCA had stock value of £8.9million and a turnover of £3.4million. 80% of the charitable turnover through revenue was levered in by 20% worth of grants.

The Beach Hotel was built in 1876 and was in its heyday in the 1950's. The YMCA were trying to return it to its former glory whilst bringing it into the 21st Century. It now had bright and cheerful guest accommodation of a high standard. There were 15 hotel bedrooms ranging in price from £85 to £120 per room per night. These rooms faced the seafront. There was a full fitness suite which was accessible to both residents and the community. The hotel had a successful booking rate and was booked up every weekend until the end of October. Since it opened 18 months ago it had become the no.1 hotel in Minehead according to guests and it had been no. 1 for the past six months. The Somerset Life magazine had put the Beach Hotel into its top 3 hotel restaurants in Somerset, behind the Dunkery Beacon Country House Hotel and the Luttrell Arms Hotel

The Beach Hotel was opened primarily to take the homeless youth of the streets and into work in the hotel/hospitality and catering industry as apprentices. This builds up their confidence and can lead to them taking hospitality courses, such as hotel management, etc. and going into work in hotels and restaurants elsewhere in the country.

When a homeless youngster first arrived at the Beach Hotel they were triaged. If they didn't have a family home they could go to, they needed supported housing. The Beach Hotel has had a homeless function for 2.5 years with no complaints. In addition to supported housing there were also units for rent on short term contracts.

Over the next 20 years the aim was to build up the number of apprentices to 20 and have more mentors to assist them. The supported housing and apprenticeship function was very important to the Beach Hotel and their success had caught the eye of BBC Points West and cascaded up to national news.

Dave informed the meeting about the Community Meal which took place every other Wednesday between 5 and 6pm, where for the donation of £5 a member of the community could come and share a delicious 2-course supper. These donations went towards providing free meal vouchers which were offered by The Food Cupboard. Those wishing to go should telephone the hotel in advance on 01643 704765.

Cllr Lawrence advised that she had taken Anne Maw, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, to the Beach Hotel and she had been very impressed with their work and had offered to assist with fundraising.

A resident asked what the difference was between the Beach Hotel and Foxes Academy. Dave responded in that whilst both organisations assisted with increasing the independence and confidence of youngsters and providing them with work experience and training, the students at Foxes had long-term disabilities and therefore needed a greater degree of live-in support.

Dave then talked about the other YMCA project in Minehead at Prospect House, which had been owned by the YMCA for approximately 4 to 5 months and housed and supported nine vulnerable adults. There was a support worker and concierge at the House. The meeting noted that Cllr Venner had been approached by members of the public who were concerned about residents from Prospect House sitting on the bench opposite Prospect House obstructing pedestrians and creating a disturbance. Dave stated that he had not received any complaints from the police and pointed out that the residents had a human right to sit on the bench, but causing an obstruction/nuisance was not acceptable and he would engage in conversations with the residents to resolve the situation.

It was noted that all the adults at Prospect House and all the apprentices at the Beach Hotel paid rent and the apprentices were taught how to budget, cook, apply for housing, etc.

Cllr Chilcott felt that the youngsters and adults were very lucky to have somewhere to go where they were safe and supported. The YMCA were teaching them to be good citizens and integrating them into the community.

Sandra thanked Dave for his informative and interesting presentation and was disappointed that not more people could have heard it.

2 Opportunities for Our Young People – Gregg Mockeridge, Deputy Headteacher, West Somerset College

Gregg reported that West Somerset College (WSC) was part of the Bridgwater College Trust along with Somerset College in Taunton and Bridgwater College. WSC ran GCSEs and A levels; 18 courses, three vocational courses, one level 2 vehicle maintenance course, one sports course and one public service course. It could not offer as much as Bridgwater College and guided students to undertake courses run in Bridgwater.

Bridget O'Brien asked whether the restaurant, hair and beauty salon and motor vehicle facility were still running. Gregg replied that hairdressing was offered to levels 9 and 11, the restaurant was being used for pre-16 students but was not open to the public, and the vehicle maintenance course was still running. In addition the nursery was operational and at capacity. It was a necessary facility for staff.

It was acknowledged by the meeting that it was very difficult for WSC to attract a high calibre of teachers, and that virtually all schools in Somerset were finding it difficult to recruit teachers in maths, English, science and languages. The high cost of housing in West Somerset made moving to the area prohibitive, together with the distances involved to reach Taunton and other larger centres. It was also noted that it was difficult to keep West Somerset's youth in the area due to the lack of career opportunities and the expensive housing.

This year the GCSE results had been very good and the College was getting back on the right track. A significant restructure had taken place in 2015 which had affected

staff and student morale, but things were improving. The College was focussing on the students' behaviour and wearing the correct uniform.

The meeting were pleased that the farm unit had been reprieved for the time being.

Cllr Mandy Chilcott stated that young people could not always afford to go away to university with the high fees and cost of accommodation, and looked forward to seeing a university of Somerset.

Gregg was asked whether sixth form figures (years 11 and 12) were up on last year. Gregg replied in that the figures were roughly in line with those of 2015, but were fluid at the moment as some students were returning to WSC. He added that an average class size was 14. The sciences – chemistry, physics, biology – were run in small numbers whereas psychology had 30 students split into two groups.

Sandra thanked Gregg for representing the College and giving the meeting an indication of how the College was running at the current time.

3 The Micro-Enterprise Project – Rhys Davies, Somerset Micro-Enterprise Project Co-ordinator (Health and Social Care)

Rhys explained that the micro-enterprises ran home help and assistance type care providing local, flexible options. He co-ordinated the running of these businesses, helping local people to set up small micro care services, assisting them with working their way through Government legislation, guidance, insurance, etc. and liaising with organisations such as Somerset County Council, the Quality Care Commission, etc.

Rhys explained the background to the Micro-Enterprise project in that originally the social care system had been dominated by a few large organisations and there was little choice for the recipients/users of the system. These small businesses had filled the gap in the market as they were able to meet the needs of the consumers and provide flexibility without the large costs.

In the 18 months following inception 253 enquiries have been received from people looking to set up their own micro-enterprise and 116 new providers had been established.

Rhys looked after an on-line directory of 160 community providers, which was kept continually updated. There were about 45 micro providers in West Somerset, eg Girl Friday Somerset was run from The Garden Room, a flower shop in Watchet, and provided a matching and introduction service between local people (working on a self-employed basis) able to offer 'home help' type services and older people needing support to live their lives independently at home. They offered a wide range of services and supports including cleaners, handymen, yoga in your own home, shiatsu practitioner, sewing services, helping to remember for people with memory loss, gardeners, drivers, mechanics, home help, care, etc.

It was important for micro-providers to meet up regularly in order to network, learn from each other and find cover for sickness and holidays, etc. Ten micro-providers met up on a regular basis in West Somerset.

Parish/Town Councils had been getting involved in the Micro-Enterprise Project to help the vulnerable people in their parish. Micro-providers had been going to parish meetings to introduce themselves and their services, and information on the help available was being included in the parish magazines, eg at Petherton.

Rhys also explained that in the past people had to employ carers, but on the whole users did not want the responsibility of employing someone. With the micro-providers, services were contracted.

Rhys acknowledged that micro-providers were not the whole answer and did not meet everyone's needs but they were good for those with budgets who know what they want. For those people with complex requirements and/or an inability to make their own decisions more traditional services were more likely to meet the need. Continuity and flexibility/responsiveness were seen as the most important elements of the service community.

Cllr Mandy Chilcott stated that many families depended totally on a carer and this made it difficult for the carer to have a holiday. Rhys informed that this was where a good network came into play with micro-providers able to provide cover for each other for sickness and holidays.

Rhys provided some financial data, as follows:

Based on 32 micro-providers in Somerset:

- Total savings to families = £561,317.
- .25% cost savings on traditional methods.

James felt that the micro-enterprise providers would be valuable to the tenants in homes run by Magna West Somerset and Taunton Deane's housing arm and that such engagement could be obtained through the tenants groups. Rhys advised that he was happy to get involved.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 June 2016

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

Matters Arising

Item 2(a) – Cynthia Stevens had enquired whether there was the possibility of a First bus going via Musgrove Park Hospital once an hour without the need for a change of buses at the bus station. Sandra to write to Cllr David Fothergill and First bus: Sandra reported that letters had been sent to Cllr Fothergill and First bus and a reply had been received from Cllr Fothergill stating that the bus service was provided commercially with no direct subsidy from Somerset County Council hence a change of route would be solely a commercial decision for the operator to make and at the present time the Buses of Somerset did not wish to extend the 28 service to Musgrove Park Hospital as this would add extra time to the current timetable which would require additional resources. The current 15-minute service to Musgrove Park Hospital from the bus station and The Parade in Taunton was seen to meet the needs of those wishing to reach the hospital from different parts of Somerset. If an opportunity arose to extend the 28 service to Musgrove Park Hospital in the future then Somerset County Council would work with the operator to facilitate this.

Sandra was unhappy with the response from Cllr Fothergill as the present situation meant that it took about 1.5 hours to travel by bus from Minehead to the hospital. Cllr Lawrence advised that people should write to Cllr Fothergill and First bus if they wished to try and make a change.

The meeting also raised the issue of the 28 bus being packed with Butlins passengers and their luggage on Mondays and Fridays, which meant that there were often few or no spaces on the bus for local residents.

Cllr Chilcott wondered if the Somerset College bus could be used to take members of the public to the hospital as it would pass Musgrove Park. Cllr Lawrence explained that these buses couldn't be used as they were contracted by the College and paid for by the students.

Due to the lack of time remaining for the meeting and the lack of representatives present to speak to their written reports (previously circulated), only three of the updates were discussed: Minehead Town Council, West Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council.

5. Town Council Update

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached) and in answer to questions from residents Mandy Chilcott explained that negotiations and talks would be taking place between West Somerset Council and the parish/town councils regarding the devolution of the responsibility of providing public toilets to the third tier of Government. It was noted that the Town Council were interested in the District Council's customer contact centre in Summerland Road as a potential administrative base, although it had also been heard that they were interested in moving into the Old Hospital. Mandy stated that the Town Council were probably waiting to see what would happen with the planning application and Listed Building Consent application for the Old Hospital.

6. District Council Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached) and James Barrah added the following:

- Both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council had voted to progress a merger of the two Councils. Much work would need to be undertaken to achieve this, including a comprehensive consultation exercise and establishing a clear timescale. Mandy added that it would not be a merger as such but the formation of a new Council.

7. County Council Update

Christine Lawrence reported that the proposed pelican crossing to go outside West Somerset College on Bircham Road had reached the design stage. It would be sited in the safest place that would advantage the majority of people. There were funds available to install the crossing and when the plans were available they would go on public display. Terry replied that the feasibility study had been accepted by the County Council

Christine also spoke to the paper that had been circulated in advance with the agenda (see attached), in that she and Brian Leaker were looking for answers from the Clinical Commissioning Group with regards to patient transport and hospital bed spaces within West Somerset. She asked anyone who was concerned about these two aspects of care to email her as she would be meeting with Roz Butterfield, Executive Assistant of the CCG in November and wished to take residents' comments with her. Christine was particularly concerned about the care of stroke patients following their discharge from Musgrove Park Hospital. The current NHS thinking was that many patients progressed better with hospital level treatment at home rather than staying in a hospital, but Christine was not convinced by this and felt that a secondary provision needed to be maintained at Williton Hospital, particularly considering the distance involved from Musgrove Park Hospital to West

Somerset. She was also worried that if the 12 beds for stroke patients at Williton Hospital were closed, even on a temporary basis, that they would be lost forever to the detriment of the West Somerset residents.

8. Any Other Business

Ron Blundell asked if there was a five-year development plan for highway works. It was agreed that this was a question for David Peake. Sandra agreed to write to David asking about future works to Minehead's roads.

ACTION: Sandra to write to David Peake to ask about future works to Minehead's roads.

9. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

Future meetings to be held on:

Wednesday, 7 December 2016 at 6.30pm in The Committee Room (behind the hall), The Lawns, Townsend Road, Minehead.

Wednesday, 8 March 2017 at 6.30pm at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe, Minehead.

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