

## Minehead Area Panel

### Notes of Meeting held on 13 June 2017 at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead

#### Present:

Sandra Slade (Chair)	Resident
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	West Somerset Council and Somerset County Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Cllr Andy Lewis	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Maureen Smith	Minehead Town Council and Transition Minehead & Alcombe
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways
Loretta Whetlor	Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)
James Guscott	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
PS Stuart Williams	Avon & Somerset Police
Alex de Mendoza	Minehead Chamber of Commerce
Naomi de Mendoza	Marston Lodge
Peter Broom	Resident & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Queens Road
John Vicary	Resident
Bridget O'Brien	Resident
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming, particularly as the date and day had been changed. She congratulated Mandy Chilcott, the new Somerset County Councillor for the Minehead Ward and Christine Lawrence for her re-election as the County Councillor for the Dunster Ward.

Apologies for absence were received from James Barra (Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council), Cllr Gail Everett (Minehead Town Council), John W F Gray (Resident), Colin Isherwood (Resident), Doug Ross (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident), PC Joe Sanderson (Avon & Somerset Police), Graham Sizer (Minehead Chamber of Commerce), Cllr Terry Venner (West Somerset Council).

#### **2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns**

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

- (a) *John Vicary had emailed to ask what progress had been made to date regarding the feasibility options for the pedestrian crossing outside West Somerset College on Bircham Road. Sandra advised that a plan showing the siting of the crossing had been brought to the meeting by Christine Lawrence and was circulating around the attendees. The issue would be addressed under the Highway Matters agenda item.*
- (b) *John Vicary had emailed to ask for an update on the possible disposal of local authority land (2.5 acres/1 hectare) identified in the main campus at West Somerset College, as per an article in the West Somerset Free Press in January 2017. Peter Elliott, Chief Executive Officer of Bridgwater College Trust, had replied that as a result of a professional valuation of the identified*

land the decision had been made not to make an application to the Secretary of State to seek permission to dispose of the land as the potential value was less than expected.

- (c) *John Gray had emailed regarding the street lights in Sainsbury Road. A number of poles and lamps in this area had been replaced with low energy units but two of the old type had been left – one at the junction of Sainsbury Road and Sainsbury Close, and one opposite the entrance to Sainsbury Hall and Sainsbury Road – and the pole at the entrance to the Hall was extremely rusted, especially at its base. Richard Bishop, Assistant Highway Lighting Engineer with Somerset County Council, had responded to advise that all the remaining old style painted steel columns in Sainsbury Road were in the structural testing programme for 2017, which was due to start in July. However, as this concern has been raised he would arrange for a technician to carry out a visual inspection of these columns.*
- (d) *John Gray had emailed regarding the grass verge from the lamppost opposite the entrance to Sainsbury Hall to the turn into Sainsbury Close as it was getting very overgrown, collecting rubbish and being used as a dog bin. For over ten years until this year it had been cut by Knightstone Housing, but they had appointed new grounds maintenance contractors at the end of last season and had discovered that they did not own this strip of land. Was it a Council's responsibility? Minehead Town Council had been contacted and had advised that they did not own any land in that area and only cut the verges that were agreed with Somerset Highways, of which this verge was not one. David advised that the area in question was not Somerset County Highways land. He added that Minehead Town Council were under no obligation to cut County Highways' grass and kindly volunteered to do it.*

*Since the meeting Sarah has ascertained that West Somerset Council do not own the land. Minehead Town Council grounds maintenance officers have trimmed the grass and weeds on this area of land once to prevent the area being an eyesore but do not own the land. A Land Registry search has revealed that Knightstone Housing Association are the owners of the land and a letter has been sent to them by the Area Panel with this information and to request that they look into the issue of maintaining this land. Knightstone have replied to say that they have instructed their grounds maintenance contractor to start maintaining this area.*

- (e) *John Vicary had emailed to find out if and when Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More scheme would be going ahead as he had heard that the project had been put on hold. A response was awaited from Chris Hall, Assistant Director at the District Council. However, both Mandy Chilcott and Andrew Hadley advised that the proposed scheme was still going ahead and new vehicles were being acquired by SWP but that it was likely to be introduced into West Somerset in one of the later tranches.*
- (f) *Peter Broom, Alex and Naomi de Mendoza raised the problems in Minehead on the afternoon of Saturday, 10 June when there had been much rowdy and disrupting behaviour within the town centre, thought to be caused by visitors to Butlins for the 90's weekend. Stuart Williams apologised for there being less than two police officers on duty within the town at the time, including only one on foot, when there would normally be four dedicated police officers on duty for a Butlins weekend (two paid for by Butlins) in addition to the usual officers, police community support officers and beat managers. Unfortunately, the patrol team had been dealing with other incidents elsewhere in the patrol area at the time. However, only one person had contacted the police. Stuart urged the meeting to encourage others to let the police know of any issues within the town when they occur.*

Mandy expressed concern and surprise that none of the businesses had contacted the police via Shopwatch. The meeting felt that sadly perhaps they had been thinking more of the financial gain to be made rather than their duty not to serve alcohol to a drunken person(s).

Stuart further advised that Butlins had a very effective wristband system for their visitors and that if a person's behaviour was inappropriate the resort would send them home. A policy of zero tolerance was operated and random spot searches were undertaken to check for large amounts of alcohol.

An 80's weekend was due to be held at Butlins on 16 and 17 June and Stuart assured those present that there would be four officers plus beat staff in attendance and that licence checks would be undertaken in Minehead's public houses over this weekend. Anyone interested in accompanying the police would be welcome and should contact him.

Mandy suggested that Butlins be invited to a Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Peter Broom raised the issue of anti-social behaviour in Blenheim Gardens as a result of alcohol being consumed in the Gardens. Stuart advised that as Summer approached Blenheim Gardens would be patrolled more regularly and alcohol removed, as necessary.

#### *Meeting of Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)*

Loretta Whetlor explained that all Councils in Somerset were members of SALC and that she was Chair of the western area and Somerset's representative on the National Association of Local Councils. It was aimed at town and parish councils and parish meetings. District councils belonged to the Local Government Association (LGA). SALC made sure that member councils were aware of the relevant legislation and operated within it; this was particularly important today as parish councils became responsible for more areas/activities and needed more training and assistance.

Loretta wished to inform the Area Panel of a SALC meeting to be held on Thursday, 22 June at 5pm in the Council Chamber of West Somerset Council in Williton, when the A358 towards Williton would be discussed with Somerset Highways in attendance, and Penny James, Chief Executive of Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council, would be present to answer questions about joint working of the two Councils, services under the prospective formation of a single Council to replace TDBC and WSC and how the new local authority would interact with the parish/town councils in relation to grass cutting, toilets, etc. Loretta asked for questions from the clerks of parish/town councils to be sent to her in advance of the meeting. The public were not allowed at the meeting but could ask the parish/town councils to raise questions for them.

Mandy added that as a District Councillor she had had meetings with every town/parish council in West Somerset concerning the issue of public toilets. Also, the documentation and consultation on the new structure was available on the website: [www.yournewcouncil.org](http://www.yournewcouncil.org)

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2017**

Maureen Smith stated that under 'Matters Arising' it should read: 'Maureen added that a unitary authority would *have solved* the problem'. Subject to this change, the minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### **Matters Arising**

*Item 2(a)* – Following the discussion on plastic recycling at the last meeting Maureen advised that there was no market for thin plastic food packaging.

### **4. Police Report**

PC Joe Sanderson had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Stuart Williams spoke to the report, as follows:

- As more incidents were being recorded it appeared that more crime was taking place, which was not the case. He would be working with Joe on drawing up an action plan in order to take positive action on the drug offences situation.
- A new beat surgery in local cafes – Coffee with Cops – was being rolled out. Three/four had taken place to date. They were usually publicised through social media, but in order to attract more people, particularly the elderly, they would also be advertised through the West Somerset Free Press and local radio. Mandy advised that Andrew Hadley and herself ran surgeries in Minehead and would welcome police involvement. This would be looked into.
- Independent Advisory Group (IAG). This Group acted as a critical friend in all aspects of interactions between police and local communities; helped formulate and critically appraise police procedures and practices, particularly around local equality and diversity issues; aimed to improve the quality of police service provided to all and would be consulted on planning, management and the evaluation of operations and critical incidents. The Group was made up of members who represented their communities and would be willing and able to engage with them effectively. The Group met a minimum of four times per year and members may also be invited to offer their views on matters that specifically related to their particular skills or expertise. IAGs played a vital role in helping the police build trust, confidence and better relationships with diverse communities. There was an IAG for Somerset West covering Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and West Somerset and more people were needed to get involved. See the attached leaflet for further information.
- Police officers were using body cameras to record anti-social behaviour.
- Issues could be reported online and via Twitter at: [aspwestsomerset](https://twitter.com/aspwestsomerset)
- Partnerships between the different Authorities (Police, Fire, Health, Education) were being looked into for Minehead and Watchet, based on the established and successful Wellington model.

## 5. **Minehead Coastal Community Team – An Update**

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mandy advised that a bid for monies for the seafront enhancement had gone to West Somerset's Planning Obligations Board, and if successful, would go to Cabinet and Full Council. Due to purdah there had been a delay in applications being considered by the Coastal Communities Fund and Leader.

## 6. **Minehead Development Trust – An Update**

There was no report available.

## 7. **Highway Matters**

David Peake reported that the SALC meeting on 22 June would be attended by Highways England. The A358 was considered as two separate roads: the Ilminster road and the Williton to Taunton road.

David read out the consultation letter sent out by Somerset County Council concerning the proposed pedestrian crossing on Bircham Road, as follows: *Somerset County Council intend to implement a pedestrian crossing as well as improve pedestrian safety at the above location. The proposals include building a new controlled pedestrian crossing and widening the footway on both sides of Bircham Road outside West Somerset College. The proposed scheme includes the relocation of two bus stops at both sides of the crossing. Also, tactile paving would be installed. The realignment/relocation of lighting columns is proposed although this would be investigated during the detailed design stage.*

A copy of the plan could be found at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/small-improvement-schemes/?entryid114=123748>

Any comments should be sent by 23 June 2017 to:

Juan Luis Gomez  
Project Manager  
Somerset County Council  
County Hall  
Taunton TA1 4DY  
Tel: 01823 359706  
Email: [JGomez@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:JGomez@somerset.gov.uk)

It was unlikely that there would be any construction of the crossing until 2018/19. Christine Lawrence said that she would be querying the delay as she had hoped that it would be undertaken in 2017/18. West Somerset College were pleased with the crossing and comments received to date had been mainly positive.

Mandy advised that the Traffic Regulation Order proposals for Minehead could not be accessed on the Traffic Regulation Order webpage. She would like a weblink to put on social media and in the West Somerset Free Press. David would look into it.

**8. Burning Issues**

Chris Jones had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting. James Guscott spoke to the report as follows:

Thirty-nine service calls had been responded to since the last meeting.

First Aid was being carried out by the Fire & Rescue Service under a pilot scheme for 'special service calls', whereby the Service crews attended to gain entry to medical emergencies for on-scene ambulance crews or gained entry to properties and provided medical care until the ambulance arrived. It was noted that forced entries were the last resort and the area would be made safe again before the Fire & Rescue Service left the scene. Alex de Mendoza advised that in Northern Ireland postmen acted as first aiders, which worked very successfully. James said he would pass this idea to the Ambulance Service. Peter Broom added that he was an ex-postman and postmen/women had always acted as informal first aiders, as they were often first on the scene. The meeting felt that the use of helplines (such as that operated by Magna) were a very beneficial first point of contact.

**9. Town Council Update**

Sue Sanders had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting and was read by Sandra to those present.

Andy Lewis advised that it was hoped that the new clubhouse and changing rooms would be used by other organisations when not needed by the Football Club.

**10. District Council Update**

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was read by Andrew Hadley to those present.

**11. County Council Update**

Christine Lawrence reported that she was no longer Chairman of the County Council. She was however back on the Cabinet with the Health and Wellbeing portfolio, which involved working with Social Services, NHS, Fire Service, etc. There were just under 500 children in care in the County. This needed to be reduced. Problems of alcohol, drug abuse and domestic abuse needed to be prevented and people needed to be encouraged to stop smoking, particularly young pregnant mothers. Loneliness was a common and often overlooked issue that affected everyone, particularly the elderly. Social activities, etc. needed to be put in place to enable this to be eradicated. Christine would be working very much on a 'prevention agenda'.

Mandy Chilcott reported that she was undergoing County Councillor training. She had recently gone to a session on health where she had learned of the shocking statistics surrounding teenage self harm, usually caused by stress brought about by, for instance, the new exam system. She had volunteered to undertake Corporate Parenting – providing help and support. She was on Health and Adult Scrutiny – looking at the NHS and adult social care. Mandy used Facebook to reach people and respond to queries, and would be using the West Somerset Free Press and emails too. She recognised that there was a need to access everyone.

## **12. The Festival of Wheels**

Andrew Hadley reported on this forthcoming event, which had been the brainchild of Graham Sizer. Minehead Events Group and Minehead Cycling Club had come together to bring cycling into the town centre, and the Festival would take place on Sunday, 10 September to coincide with the Flying Scotsman coming to the Station. A kilometre-long route in the heart of the town would be closed to traffic for the whole day for a series of cycle races, the longest lasting about one hour. It was proposed that the road would be closed from Stones to just short of the junction with Bancks Street and then down to the junction with Blenheim Road, along Blenheim Road then along North Road back to Stones. British Cycling would be undertaking risk assessments for the event and officiating on the day. Volunteers were needed to set up and take down about 1,000 steel barriers.

Graham had been talking to businesses and an initial letter would soon be going out to residents and businesses explaining the road closures, with the day's timetable being confirmed later. Sponsorship of about £5,000 had been obtained.

It was proposed that the car park in North Road would be available for displaced residents parking and there would be additional visitor parking on the seafront.

The proposed racetrack would centre around Blenheim Gardens. Starting and finishing at the old hospital, riders will race up The Parade to the Bancks Street junction, negotiate a tight U-turn back down The Parade then turn in to Blenheim Road, along North Street and back up The Avenue.

Andrew added that it was hoped that the Festival would expand in future years.

The meeting raised the issue of carer visits and how these would be managed. Somerset Care and other agencies would need to be advised of the road closure.

As an aside, it was noted that the big wheel on the seafront would not be returning to Minehead this year.

## **13. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **14. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings**

### **Future meetings to be held on:**

Wednesday, 11 October 2017 at 6.30pm at St Michael the Archangel Church Hall, Alcombe, Minehead.

Thursday, 8 March 2018 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead.