

**Dunster Area Panel**

**Tuesday, 1st October, 2019,  
7.00 pm**

**Council Chamber - West Somerset  
House**

**Somerset West  
and Taunton**

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**Members:**

**Agenda**

- 1. Minutes of the Meeting 01.10.2019**

(Pages 3 - 8)



**JAMES HASSETT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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Minutes of Dunster Area Panel Meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 Council Chambers Williton

Attendance

Bicknoller Parish Council	Julian Anderson		Somerset West and Taunton Council	Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew
Carhampton Parish Council	Philip Laramy Alan Hemsley Brenda Maitland-Walker		Somerset West and Taunton Council	Natalie Green
Crowcombe Parish Council	Tony Brooks		SCC Highways	David Peake
Elworthy Parish Council	Ron Buckingham		Somerset County Council	Cllr Christine Lawrence
Old Cleeve Parish Council	Margaret Smith Geoff Williams		Wessex Resolutions CIC	Martine Bryant
Nettlecombe Parish Council	Marilyn Crothers		Wessex Resolutions CIC	Emma Lower
Monksilver Parish Council	Kate Adams		Somerset West and Taunton Council	Beccy Brown
Dunster Parish Council	Peter Finney		West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing Team. Avon and Somerset Police	Sharon Baker Partnership Officer
Somerset West and Taunton Council	Cllr Peter Pilkington			

Apologises

Faye Barringer-Capp

Cllr Marcus Kravis

Ian Liddell-Granger MP

Meeting chaired by Cllr Peter Pilkington as Chairman Faye Barringer-Capp was unable to attend.

**Wessex Resolutions**

Talk by Martine Bryant and Emma Lower on the Home Improvement Loan and Oil Schemes

Wessex Resolutions is a non-profit making loan provider who have been successfully working in partnership with the Somerset West and Taunton Council for 15 years.

The partnership was set-up to enable homeowners within your communities to access funding in the form of a fixed rate loan (currently fixed at 4%) to make essential repairs & home improvements to their homes, rather than provide one off grant payments to repair deteriorating housing and as each loan is repaid it becomes available to help another homeowner.

Martine would welcome the opportunity to share more about the partnership at Parish Council meetings and how Wessex can support work to make homes safer, healthier and warmer for people in the community. The website and the power point presentation attached to these minutes gives further information.

### **Have your say**

GW Road at Dragons Cross: Concerns on res-surfacing previously raised were unfounded. Work has been very satisfactory and GW expressed his thanks to DP.

GW State of the roadside hedges is very poor due to cost saving measures (only 1 meter high cut). This causes narrowing of roads and overhanging vegetation causing danger to cyclists. This is especially bad on parts of the Dunster Steam Railway cycle path.

GW asked how much the reduced service had saved, are landowners being informed if their hedges are causing a problem and what is going to happen next year?

DP advised that there are 8000 miles of hedgerows in Somerset so a consistent policy had to be maintained. The 1 meter cut policy is saving money but is also an environmental improvement for wildlife. The vast majority of vegetation and hedges are privately owned and there are agricultural constraints that have to be factored in as well (farmers can cut roadside hedges any time of the year for H&S purposes but are not permitted to cut inside field hedges until September 1<sup>st</sup>). Highways will enforce if necessary but more action is usually taken if the request comes from the community. Cllr CL advised that the Parish Council should write to the landowner in the first instance asking for the hedges to be cut. If nothing happens then a letter should be written to SCC Highways.

Comment from the floor that by not cutting back the hedges until the end of September was beneficial for wildlife.

GW requested an update from DP on the plans for the winter – salting, grit bin top up. GW challenged the ownership of grit bins being passed to PC as he cannot find any relevant documentation.

DP replied that the salt bins are not owned by SCC. If the bins have been provided by SCC the Parish Council have to pay for it. No records on ownership have been maintained

DP informed the Panel that review had taken place and the criteria for gritting was centred on main road linkage. Salt bins will be filled by SCC at no cost but requested that information on the location of salt bins and whether salt is required is provided well in advance. Dumpy salt bags are being put back to where they positioned before. PC collection of small dumpy bags will not be available – if smaller bags are required PCs need to arrange to get their own.

GM asked if repair to the crumbling wall on the A39 in Washford is the responsibility of Highways. NG said it was the responsibility of Building Control if it adjacent to a house and that she would look into it.

PL highlighted that on the B3151 on entering Blue Anchor there are 3 skid risks signs which fall into the road. Also road signs are being obliterated by hedges and vegetation.

DP replied that the signs are usually put down to warn about spillage.

The Watchet turning into Old Cleeve (Cleeve Priory Road) – rubbish has been left there.

NG will look into this and get it removed.

MS A39 Dunster Blue Anchor turning – the vegetation covering the sign had now been cut back.

Dirty signs - approach to Dragons Cross – the sign cannot be seen on the A39.

DP replied that SC Highways is trying to catch up with outstanding works.

MS The bend in the road at Old Cleeve Farm had been resurfaced but is very narrow, the white lines need to be replaced and overhanging vegetation is reducing the width of the road.  
DP confirmed that the white line will be reinstated.

BMW had a complaint from a resident about clearance of a gullies. The silt had been cleared but placed on top side of the gully which was then washed back in. Asked that it is removed and not left. DP replied that it is not always possible if there isn't a verge to scatter it.  
BMW reported that a cyclist had been hit in the face along the Alcombe to Dunster back road by overgrown vegetation.

RB commented that permission had been granted for 130 more houses and raised concern on congestion and where all the new residents will work.  
Cllr PP will feedback to Planning.

Question raised on flood prevention work and whether planning permission is needed if a pond is installed.  
ATBF advised that for non-agriculture purposes, planning permission is required.

Request that the gullies in Elworthy need to be cleared due to straw causing blockages.

ATB commented that previously DP was present to take highway questions from Parish Council representatives 20 minutes before the main meeting and which saved time during the main meeting.  
PL pointed out that the minutes from those meetings were not recorded and felt that it was important that they were.

#### **Highways planned works – David Peake**

DP said that there are many complaints about highways at Panel minutes which are disproportionate to other services. Highways have to work within the constraints of policy and funding cutbacks due to social care (adult care uses 38% of revenue budget and children care uses £25%). Savings have to be made in revenue budget - £1m saving out of a budget of £7m. To put into context saving in winter package is the same amount of funding needed for 1 complex care case – there are statutory and moral obligations that must be fulfilled.

Vegetation maintenance and winter emergency both part of revenue budget. 25000 potholes a year are filled to keep on top of road maintenance. Policy on vegetation signed off by Members.

Dunster Marsh – patching and micro surfacing will take place after the pavement has been created and there will be some disruption due to some road closure.

BMW asked if the lights on the carpark ticket machines had been adjusted and BB confirmed that this had been actioned.

#### **Rights of Way Application at Blue Anchor**

DP provided the following information:

- The application was made by West Somerset Ramblers in May 2017. It seeks to record a route to the north of the chalets as a public footpath (see attached application plan).

- The application is supported by evidence forms detailing use by 132 members of the public. Collectively their use runs from 1935 to 2017
- As SCC were unable to determine the application within 12 months, the applicant was able to approach the Planning Inspectorate and seek a direction. Their approach was successful and SCC were directed to make an order by 2 October 2018.
- It is unlikely that we will be in a position to meet that direction but it is anticipated that investigation of the application will begin during the summer.
- Consultation and research began last month. In due course some of those who provided evidence will be interviewed in order to glean more detailed information. Following interviews, SCC should be in a position to draft a decision report.
- It's worth stressing that the application seeks to record a right of way which the applicant believes already exists. If the application is successful it will not create a new right but will lead to an existing one being formally recorded.

#### **Police report - Sharon Baker Partnership Officer**

Full police report as follows:

*'Back in August we had a spate of Non dwelling burglary attempts in the Timberscombe /Dunster area , 2 of the 3 attempts were successful and items taken from outbuildings.*

*We promote the Horse and Farm watch in the area in general but again at this time due to 2 of the locations being Farm type areas. One of the victims benefitted from our free postcode marking scheme and a security check/advice of the grounds. Please contact me if Farm or Horse watch would be something you would be interested in. [Linda.brooks@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Linda.brooks@avonandsomerset.police.uk)*

*Just before the School holidays I held a competition at Dunster first school regarding road Safety . We monitor the Zig zag parking at the school for the safety of the children. The competition involved the children designing a poster relating to this and road safety. I selected two winners whose posters were printed onto the banner and now displayed outside the school asking parents and motorists not to park on the zig zags. The banners were kindly donated by local firm Active signs. Next month I will be visiting Dunster and Timberscombe school with a road safety input.*

*I have an online facebook page for the Exmoor area and we will advertise local beat surgeries and day to day goings on or any relevant crime prevention advice. You can find me under PCSO Linda Brooks.*

*We are actively promoting all our schemes which include Neighbourhood Watch , Community Speed watch , and Farm and Horse Watch. If you are interested in helping out in your community and are interested in running or being part of a scheme please contact your local PCSO.*

*A new site for Community Speed Watch is nearly ready in Carhampton and there has been an enquiry from Porlock.*

*Unfortunately the parking meter at Dunster Beach was broken into overnight on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> September . we have been unable to trace anyone involved . I understand security measures such as CCTV are being looked into as a general improvement with security. CCTV helps massively with helping us identify possible offenders and or timings of such incidents.*

*Look out for local updates regarding beat surgeries and coffee with cops beat surgeries held in local Tearooms. I promote these on the Avon and Somerset Police Website and on my facebook page'.*

Cllr PP thanked Linda Brooks for the great work that she does as the Police Community Support Officer for Porlock and Dunster Areas.

CllrPP introduced Natalie Green Client Officer Somerset West and Taunton Council.

NG manages partners responsible to do with cleansing bins, fly tipping, building control, toilets and refuse collection etc.

MS thanked CH – the bins are now regularly emptied along the seafront at Blue Anchor.

NG informed the Panel that an extra bin had been installed.

BMW thanked Highways and IdVerde for the quick removal of rubbish from the side of the road.

Short discussion about public toilets, the cost of running them and the imbalance of funding available for maintenance between Taunton and West Somerset.

### **Council Update – Cllr PP**

PP said that the Council is nearly fully staffed and Planning is fully staffed. Some areas including Environmental Health are having problems in recruiting.

The Local Plan is being worked up and will be open to consultation from November this will be used to beef up our local planning objectives. A new Draft Corporate Strategy is being commissioned and will be completed during the winter of 2019. This will help the Council make informed decisions about how to direct its own resources and contribute to growth and investment.

The Draft Somerset Climate Emergency Framework SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience plan is progressing through the councils democratic process, it is a living working document combining a Somerset wide approach and our own SWT plan and will be open to consultation until it's final adoption hopefully by July 2020.

A new Prosperity and Economic Development strategy is being commissioned and will be completed during the winter of 2019. This will help the Council make informed decisions about how to direct its own resources and contribute to growth and investment.

RB asked how CO2 is measured. Cllr PP replied that they are working with Exeter University Research but the answer is very difficult to answer!

BMW informed the Panel that John Buttivant will be giving a talk on coastal erosion on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 2.00pm at Samford Brett Village Hall and members of the public are welcome.

Concern was raised about the sulphur discharge at Dunster Marsh and that no notification of a major incident was made.

Cllr CL said that the incident was serious and not major and did not cause a threat to life. Only the people who may have been affected were informed and that no further action has been required.

Next meeting 7.00pm 7<sup>th</sup> January Council Chambers Williton.

