

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held 11 September 2019 In The Old Hospital, The Avenue, Minehead

Present:

Cllr Andy Kingston-James	Chair (part of meeting) Minehead Town Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	Somerset County Council
Cllr Paul Bolton	Somerset West and Taunton Council and Minehead Town Council
Cllr Benet Allen	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr Craig Palmer	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr Mimi Palmer	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Anne Lawton	Minehead Town Council
David Peake	Somerset Highways
Chief Inspector Lisa Simpson	Avon & Somerset Police
Mark Shields	Community Council for Somerset
Bill Howard	The Old Hospital
Ray Tew	Minehead Development Trust
Mark Kingston-James	Resident
John Vicary	Resident
Peter Broom	Resident
Stephen Brown	Resident
Paul Johnson	Resident
Rosemary Lawson	Resident
Ann Jackson	Resident
Daphne Barr	Resident
Martin Wilsher	Resident
Harold Compton	Observer
Samantha Murrell	Somerset West and Taunton Council (Chair for part of meeting)
Sarah Wilsher	Somerset West and Taunton Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Samantha Murrell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself as a Localities Engagement Lead for Somerset West and Taunton Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Dabner (Butlins), Anne Clarke (Manor Road Neighbourhood Watch/Resident), Cllr Andrew Hadley (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Andrew Hopkins (Minehead BID), Colin Isherwood (Resident), Chris Jones (Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service), Cllr Marcus Kravis (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Cllr Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council), Lewis Lintern (MATA/The Avenue Methodist Church), Sue Lloyd (Resident), Katrina Midgley (Engage/Minehead Coastal Community Team), Bridget O'Brien (Resident), Doug Ross (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident), Graham Sizer (Minehead BID), Maureen Smith (Transition Minehead and Alcombe/Forum 21).

2. Election of Chair

Samantha reported that Jean Parbrook had decided not to stand as Chair and Sarah read out a letter that Jean had written to the residents of Minehead, giving her reasons for not standing for re-election, thanking Sarah and all those who had shown her kindness and support over the last 18 months and wishing the Panel continued success under the new Chairman.

Mandy Chilcott asked for appreciation of Jean's work as Chair to be minuted.

Samantha explained that nominations for the post of Chair were accepted until 31 August 2019. Only one nomination had been received before the deadline, from Andrew Kingston-James, Minehead Town Councillor, who had been proposed by Cllr Craig Palmer and Cllr Paul Bolton. As the only person standing Cllr Andrew Kingston-James was duly elected as Chair and chaired the meeting from this point on.

3. **Somerset Village & Community Agents Service – Mark Shields, West Somerset Village & Community Agent, Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

Mark Shields explained that Village Agents offered free confidential and non-judgemental support to people in the community who needed advice, help and support on a range of issues from health and wellbeing to financial and practical. Village Agents and other support organisations/agencies could be found at the Talking Café every Monday from 10am to 1pm at the Beach Hotel in Minehead, in Porlock once per month and in Williton every Tuesday. The Agents also did home visits. Mark advised that he would be available at the end of the meeting if anyone wanted to have a chat with him or pick up a leaflet/business card.

4. **Have Your Say**

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

- (a) *Stephen Brown advised that there was Japanese Knotweed along the Culvercliffe walk:* Mimi Palmer offered to have a look and Sarah contacted the Grounds Maintenance team at SWT.

ACTION: Culvercliffe to be checked for Japanese knotweed.

The grounds maintenance team at SWT have advised that there is an issue of Japanese Knotweed at Culvercliffe due to it having been dumped there many years ago when the area was a former landfill site. The team do their best to control it on an ongoing basis. The details of where Mr Brown spotted the plant has been relayed to the team and action has been taken towards its eradication.

- (b) *Stephen Brown also raised the issue of a tree at the bottom of Marshfield Road, which was damaging the pavement:* Andrew Kingston-James to look into it.

ACTION: Andrew Kingston-James to investigate the tree damaging the pavement in Marshfield Road.

After investigations it appears that the roots of a tree on land next to 87 Marshfield Road is damaging the footpath that runs from the bottom of Marshfield Road to Seaward Way (alongside the Rose Garden). This path is believed to be owned by Minehead Town Council. The owners of the tree have been contacted and an assurance received that they will remediate the issue as part of the construction works for the two dwellings that have received planning permission on this land.

5. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2019**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Item 8 – A resident had advised that on Saturday 22 June during the Cycle Grand Prix the bus stop outside the Co-op in The Avenue had been closed but there was no signage to alert passengers. The Chair reported that Andrew Hopkins, Minehead BID Manager, had advised that both he and Buses of Somerset had put up posters on the bus timetable information pole to say that the stop was closed and where the alternative stops were. However, if these posters would have been better placed on the bus shelter then he would be happy to do this in the future, for events with a BID input and involving the closure of a bus stop(s).

6. Minehead BID

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

7. Minehead Coastal Communities Team – An Update

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

8. Minehead Development Trust – An Update

Ray Tew reported that the Minehead Development Trust were responsible for the Minehead Information Centre, which was a limited company. The end of the financial year for the Information Centre was 30 September 2019. There had been an increase in footfall to the Centre of about 5% compared to the same period in 2018. This was measured by a counter on the main door, but as customers could exit through the main door as well as enter, and also use the museum entrance, figures obtained were approximate.

Sally Turner was the current Centre Manager, and was working with local Centres in Somerset and Devon. The Minehead Bay brand was employed and reports on the use of the brand would be produced in October. The website was constantly updated including regular blogs and there was a need for more locally produced photos for the website, which were not subject to copyright. A regular newsletter was produced which included such details as where journeys could be disrupted by Hinkley traffic. The Centre would move to Winter opening hours in November.

9. Police Report

Lisa Simpson introduced herself. She had previously been an Inspector based in Minehead and was now Chief Inspector for the area from Simonsbath to Weston-super-Mare. She reported that the Police wished to engage more with the public and she saw the Area Panels as important engagement opportunities. With £20m lost and 700 fewer officers it was difficult for the limited number of officers to make contact with the community and they were no longer able to report direct to the 150 Town and Parish Councils in the area. However, they would commit to attending the Area Panels. The programme of Area Panels therefore needed to be extended to ensure that they were opened up to all the parishes and towns in the district area. Police officers were happy to give reports at Area Panel meetings as well as discuss issues, as required, after the meetings.

The Chief Constable or Deputy Chief Constable plus the Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending a public forum on Tuesday, 24 September from 7 to 9pm in the Exmoor Meeting Room at the Beach Hotel in Minehead. The forum would be opened by Frederica Smith-Roberts, Leader of Somerset West and Taunton Council, before a welcome from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy/Chief Constable. Lisa would be giving a presentation

on local policing. Local people would be able to take part in an open question and answer session. To attend it was necessary to register for a free ticket. This could be done online at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pcc-police-public-forum-minehead-tickets-68277847881> or emailing pcc@avonandsomerset.police.uk or tel: 01278 646188. Questions needed to be emailed to the above email address in advance so that any necessary research could be carried out beforehand.

Mandy advised that unfortunately the Annual General Meeting of Minehead BID was also on the evening of 24 September.

Lisa explained that the police wished to make themselves more visible within the community including via social media. The meeting noted that PC Sam Donati made good use of Facebook to keep the public updated on incidents/activities.

Beresford Mandley asked whether new PCSOs or special constables were being looked for at the moment. Lisa advised that according to the PM, Boris Johnson, 20,000 police officers were to be recruited, which would lead to a massive PCSO recruitment programme, including about 500 in Avon and Somerset over the next three years. Voluntary special constables were also needed and were required to do a minimum of 16 hours per week. Details were available on the website: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

Paul Johnson asked for Lisa's opinion on the police using bicycles. She stated that cycling increased the officers' engagement with the community and provided a more friendly, visible and accessible approach. Paul agreed and said that he thought cycling enabled officers to see, hear and smell more.

10. **Highway Matters**

David Peake reported the following:

- Tree pruning had taken place at Dunster Steep so there were no longer overhanging branches obscuring the left hand pole of the traffic lights. These works had unfortunately caused some traffic disruption for which Somerset Highways apologised.
- Combeland Road had been resurfaced.
- Surface dressing at Bilbrook had taken place with an associated evening road closure.
- Future evening closures from 6.30pm to 11.30pm were planned to enable resurfacing works to take place at Dragons Cross in Bilbrook. No dates were currently available for the works. *Since the meeting information has become available on dates and times. The A39 will be closed from 6.30pm to 11.30pm from Monday 7 to Friday 11 October and then will be closed from 6.30pm to 11.30pm from Monday 14 to Wednesday 16 October.*

Beresford Mandley asked for the number of highway Ash trees in Minehead and the number of Ash trees with Ash dieback. He was advised that such statistics were not currently available but Ash dieback was an issue in Minehead and trees were regularly checked. Two trees with Ash dieback had been felled as part of the Dunster Steep operations. Mandy Chilcott added that there were about 22,000 highway trees in Somerset so monitoring was not an easy or quick process.

A resident asked whether there were any plans for road improvements at Fownes Road in Alcombe. David replied that there were no plans at the current time.

Craig Palmer asked if there was a programme in respect of roadside drainage. David replied that there was a routine schedule of every four years in urban areas and every two years in rural areas. Roads with frequent blocking up issues were checked more regularly. If there was a 'ponding' problem reactive works were undertaken, otherwise works would be fitted into the maintenance programme. Problem issues of roadside drainage could be phoned in on 0300 123 2224 or emailed to: countyroads-westsom@somerset.gov.uk

Paul Johnson reported that the east facing red light at Dunster Steep needed looking into as it was dimmed.

ACTION: David Peake to check the traffic lights at Dunster Steep.

11. Burning Issues

A written report had not been received for circulation from the Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and there was no officer available.

Paul Johnson asked if people were filling in the surveys, which were due in by 22 September. Residents were encouraged to do so.

12. Town Council Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

13. District Council (SWT) Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mimi Palmer enquired about the location of the land SWT were selling to McDonalds and how McDonalds proposed to use the land. Sarah thought that the land in question was to the rear of McDonalds between their restaurant and the footpath running from the station to Seaward Way. She did not know what it was intended to be used for, but any building works would require planning permission and planning applications were in the public domain.

Mimi also asked about the commercial units mentioned in the report. Sarah explained that two commercial units had been granted planning permission on land off Seaward Way next to the forty dwellings approved for Magna Housing. These units would enable existing businesses to expand. The meeting asked who Greenside were and it was thought that it probably referred to Greenslades who were a grounds maintenance business based in Cannington.

Paul Johnson asked for news on Blenheim Gardens. Andrew explained that at the moment there was nothing to add to the updates in the District and Town Council reports.

14. Somerset County Council Update

Mandy Chilcott reported the following:

- She had recently attended a Scutiny Committee meeting with the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Minehead Hospital's Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) had been discussed. There had been an impromptu overnight closure of MIU due to lack of staffing, but there had been little publicity of this to the community. Information on the closure could have been made available on Facebook and via West Somerset radio. Minehead's MIU was one of a few in Somerset that was open 24/7 and Mandy considered it essential that it remain open. 12,462 incidents/injuries had been dealt with over the last year. The NHS were

actively recruiting and two nurse practitioners had recently been appointed for the West area.

- The performance of ambulances had declined and this was being monitored by the Quality Care Commission.
- The 111 telephone service was currently being run by Devon Doctors.
- Figures relating to stroke treatment had improved.
- Apprenticeships were seen as very important by Somerset County Council and over 300 apprenticeships were being run by the Council. Social workers were very difficult to recruit so twelve existing officers were being upskilled and trained to degree level to become social workers.
- She had recently undertaken excellent mental health first aid training. This was open to all and although there was a cost Mandy considered it to be worthwhile. Mental health care was under funded by the NHS and at the Scrutiny Committee meeting the NHS had stated that they were aware of this deficit and planned to improve the service. Mark Shields advised that the Community Council for Somerset were rolling out a mental health village agents scheme in October. Tracey Bland was the mental health village agent in West Somerset, working in conjunction with local GPs.

John Vicary asked for an update on the pedestrian crossing for Bircham Road. Mandy advised that this project had been costed and put forward for the County Council's Small Improvement Scheme (SIS). It was one of 90 SIS projects throughout the County. Monies had recently been put in place for the delivery of these projects within the next two years.

15. Any Other Business

Somerset West and Taunton

Paul Johnson had received a compliments slip form SWT. It had their name on it but there was no mention of the word 'Council'. Were they really a Council? Also, only a PO Box address was given. Why was this only given and not the addresses of physical offices. David Peake explained that it was the same with the County Council. Post was scanned in centrally and then distributed electronically to officers who could be working at a number of different locations – offices, depots, homeworking, etc.

16. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

Future meetings to be held on:

- Thursday, 12 December 2019 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead.
- Wednesday, 18 March 202 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead.