

# Full Council Meeting – 27 July 2021

## Report of Councillor Andy Sully – Environmental Services

It gives me great pleasure to present my first report to Full Council on the varied activities of the Environmental Services Portfolio.

The most high profile of the Portfolio is Somerset Waste Partnership and the Contract we have with Suez.

**Refuse - Somerset Waste Partnership** - is a partnership between Somerset West and Taunton together with South Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor who have a legal duty to collect the waste, this has been contracted by SWP to Suez. Somerset County Council have a legal duty to dispose of the waste collected by the Districts this is contracted to Viridor.

Many of you will have been contacted by residents regarding missed collections over the last few weeks, the main problem is not having enough HGV drivers. Mikey Green the MD of SWP escalated the problems being experienced to the Chief Exec of Suez, which has had the desired effect. Additional drivers from around the Country have been redeployed to Somerset, we should have sufficient drivers to achieve a full allocation going forward. As I write this report 13<sup>th</sup> July there are no significant issues with either Rubbish or Garden Waste collections, however there were missed collections yesterday in parts of Taunton (Mount Nebo), Monkton Heathfield and Creech St. Michael.

- **Recycle More**

The new service is due to start being rolled out in SWT from November 2021 in two phases completing in Spring 2022. This will be subject to an improvement in current service levels as set out above. The new kerbside service adds new materials to weekly recycling collections (household and food plastic pots, tubs and trays, food and drink cartons, small household batteries and small electrical items) and reduce residual waste collections to three weekly. This will both reduce the cost of the service and increase recycling rates. More detailed briefings for members are booked for July with a full communications plan for residents. The Taunton depot has started its redevelopment ready for Recycle More.

- **Decarbonising Somerset Waste Partnership Operations**

As set out in the SWP Business Plan 2021-26, the Partnership have an ambitious agenda to decarbonise their operations. A paper updating on progress in key areas, specifically around electric vehicles, alternative fuels, exploring photovoltaics/lower carbon electricity at key depots, and progress with the Avonmouth Plastics Processing Facility can be found here. [Somerset County Council](#)

### **Street Cleansing**

- **Spring Clean Project**  
The new initiative which has been running between April and June has had the desired effect. An update was provided to all members at the halfway point of the project and a further one will be provided at the completion. The extra team have been out in open spaces areas throughout SWT keeping them clean and tidy for the public to use. This work has resulted in the collecting of several tonnes of litter. Support to community litter picks has been given through the purchase of litter picking kits which can be lent out. These will be available all year. A Comms campaign has been ongoing throughout the project taking up issues regarding litter and the associated problems it causes. This project has been a great success and consideration is being made to add this to the budget for future years. I am also looking into a deep clean programme of power washing our local towns, and will update members on future plans soon.
  
- **Litter and Dog Bins**  
Having successfully been awarded a grant and a provision in the budget is allowing for a review of current bins and a replacement programme to be developed. In the first quarter of 21/22 a survey has been completed to review all litter and dog bins for location and condition. Recommendations on the locations of the replacement bins will be coming forward over the coming months. The new style bins to be used will allow for recycling of tins and plastic and allow for the disposal of both litter and dog waste. Communicating with town and parish Councils and ward members has been included as part of the project delivery.
  
- **Public Toilets**  
The toilets at Bishops Lydeard Railway Station have been deep cleaned and reopened prior to The Railway commencing their operations following the Covid-19 Lockdown. In addition to this, all the ceilings here have been repaired and we are planning to do the repairs at the Wellington Park Toilets.
  
- **Pavilion toilets – Victoria Park toilet facilities**  
Councillor Simon Cole's had been requesting that the toilet facilities be brought back into use, especially as the American Footballers practice on a Thursday evenings and also play on some Sundays. Following on from Councillor Cole's request I am pleased to inform Full Council that the toilets will be re-opened at Victoria Park.

In order for the toilet facilities to be recommissioned several items had to be attended to:

1. Electrical remedial works and safety certification
2. Legionella testing, chlorination and flushing
3. Cleaning throughout

4. In addition the installation of waterless urinals took place at the beginning of July

### **Parks and Open Spaces**

- **Electric Hand Tools**  
Following the trial earlier in the year the replacement of some of the service's old petrol hand tools with electric hand tools has been completed. These are both quieter and have a lower impact on the environment.
- **Programme of work**  
The summer grounds maintenance programme is on schedule despite the excellent growing conditions with half the grass cutting programme completed. This includes work on SWT owed land, HRA land and highways verges on behalf of SCC.  
The joint working with the street cleansing contractor to clear litter prior to grass cutting verges has had the expected benefits and improving the appearance of the district.

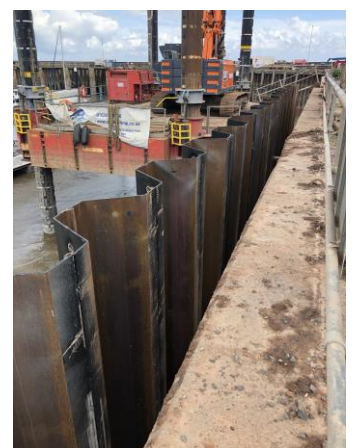
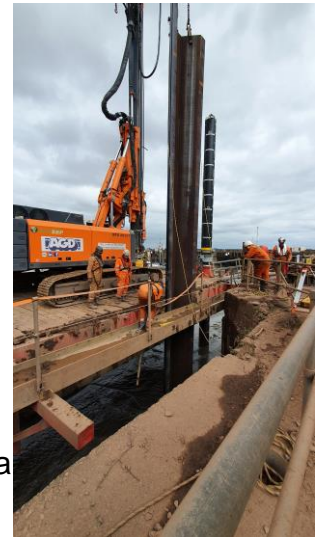
### **East Quay Marina Wall – Watchet**

Works to undertake the replacement of the central section of the East Quay Marina Wall, Watchet are progressing well and are on schedule. Teignmouth Maritime Services have been contracted to undertake the work.

The works are needed following a structural review of the walls which found that the central section was at the end of its useful life. SWT agreed a budget of £740,000 and work began on site in June 2021 with completion expected in late August.

The project involves driving a series of 17m long sheet piles up to 7m into the bedrock below the Marina floor and connecting this new wall to a landward 'piled' wall driven into the East Quay itself. The latter wall is anchored to the former by steel ties. A huge 'jack up barge' has been temporarily located in the Marina itself to host the piling rig, the whole process has been fascinating viewing for both visitors and tourists with a great deal of interest in what SWT is delivering.

The project is managed by Kate Marks from the Environment team.



## Blue Anchor Permanent Coastal Defence Scheme

Work continues to seek the required permissions and to finalise the design of the Blue Anchor scheme which will ultimately protect the B3191 road between Blue Anchor and Watchet.

In 2020 Emergency works took place to stabilise a failing sea defence wall and to protect the crumbling cliffs below the Blue Anchor Hotel. This involved the placement of 1800 tons of rock armour and significant strengthening works to the ageing defence wall.

The permanent scheme requires planning permission, approval from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England and the Crown Estate. A design is currently being finalised by our engineering consultants, WSP.

It is anticipated that the work will start in spring 2022 as there is a 13 week wait for MMO permissions and a further lengthy lead in time to secure appropriate sea transport to deliver the rock. The work can't be undertaken in the winter months without a great deal of financial and delivery risk hence the spring start date.

The project, estimated to cost c£4m, is being entirely funded by SCC as Highways Authority and through Environment Agency grants, and managed by SWT as the Coastal Protection Authority.

Funding for the design stage was secured through an Environment Agency grant.

## Other Projects

We have secured a £50,000 grant from the Somerset Rivers Authority to undertake preliminary works in connection with the replacement/repair of the **Dulverton Weir and Leat**. These are historic structures which are owned by SWT and in need of repair. We are working closely with the Dulverton Weir and Leat Trust to seek funding for the works. This year we are undertaking ecology surveys and updating designs and costs in preparation for restoration works in 2022/23 if funding can be secured.

A tender for repairs to an area of the River Bank on the **Doniford River at Sampford Brett** was posted on the Council's procurement portal in July 2021. It is anticipated that this work – to strengthen a riverbank damaged by scour - is required to prevent the possibility of flooding in the village and will be carried out in the late summer of this year and be funded entirely by the Somerset Rivers Authority.

The new Marina Operator (The Marine Group) is making significant progress in removing silt from the **Watchet Marina** through Water Injection Dredging with approximately one third of the vessels in the Marina now able to float at low water as



a result of the actions. This is real positive progress given that the Marine Group only started in April 2021.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all the officers in the various teams that make up the portfolio who are delivering exceptional services in challenging times and have been very helpful to me in taking up my new role on the Executive.