

Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel

19th March 2019

7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

NOTES AND ACTION POINTS

PRESENT:

Councillor David Westcott (Chair)	West Somerset Council
Councillor Rosemary Woods	West Somerset Council
David Peake	SCC Highways
Councillor Ian Aldridge	West Somerset Council
Loretta Whetlor	Watchet Town Council
Sally De Renzy Martin	Watchet Town Council
Gordon Tizzard	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Tony Murray (MD)	Magna Housing Association
Sharon Baker	Avon & Somerset Police
Samantha Murrell	West Somerset Council
Mrs Marina King	Resident

1. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

An opportunity for local people to influence what happens in their neighbourhood and the opportunity to share their views on a raft of issues that affect their lives.

- “Mrs Marina King – Footpath at “29 Brendan Road, Watchet”,
Footpath is overgrown but is used by pedestrians and they are walking in the road. Dangerous. From the station up to the old mill. The mill which previously had responsibility for cutting back the shrubbery is now empty. So the landowner would be responsible if it can be determined who owns the plot.
 - David Peakes explained that this was in fact a verge that has become hardened with use. Not a proper pathway. A bid can be made for SCC for improvement / or S106 from development money. This could turn the “pathway” into a more recognised and maintained walkway. Various routes that can be explored. There would be certain H&S implications because the road was very narrow at that point, and it might not be safe to actually build a pavement wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, without causing “pinch points” on the road.
 - Sally De Renzy Martin – identified that there are alternative walkways available. Churchfields could be cleared and some additional lighting provided it might be a safer alternative. This is part of the Mill Development so won't be a quick fix. – **ACTION POINT – WTC WILL PUT IT ON THE AGENDA FOR THEIR NEXT MEETING**

2. Apologies for Absence

John Richards / Cllr Stuart Dowding

3. Matters Arising from meeting held on 4th December 2019

Not available but will be going forward.

3. Magna West Somerset Housing Association

The Magna Housing Annual Report was circulated with the Agenda. Comments and questions were welcomed.

- Rosemary Woods advised
 - Service charges that have been introduced that weren't there previously on existing tenants (80 residents are being charged an extra £3.50 per week for the use of the piper life-line which they didn't "need"). Tony Murray made the comment that if this was not needed then alternative housing should be considered to allow this property to be utilised by those tenants who would require this service.
 - Community Rooms – mainly for use of the residents as they are charged for the use and maintenance in their rent. They can be used by the wider community but the residents are fiercely protective of this space.
 - The Development site at Liddymore Road will have some element of affordable housing as planning obligation will require this. Housing development will reflect local need so will be handled sensitively. Geared at a mixed development. (Sheltered, families and bungalows for downsizing).
 - Hardstandings to reduce congestion. No parking near green spaces. Managed car parking has been introduced elsewhere to allow resident parking. This is something that might be considered in the future, but is an outsourced service that is self-financing. (Resourced via penalties).
- Loretta Whetlor
 - Can the community rooms be charged out so that more use could be made of them. More ages and integration to combat isolation and loneliness? Tony Murray explained that they are trying to bring in outside recreational activities to improve the space and timetable events more formally.
 - Liddymore Road – Parking and maintenance of the green spaces on housing estates. Can these areas be better maintained?
 - Gardening charges – is there a more affordable option available to pensioners to assist them maintain their open spaces. Seeds for Hope etc? Tony Murray asked that Loretta forward her contacts so that these options can be explored further.
- Dave Westcott
 - Meals on Wheels – no longer cooking these meals themselves as this is no longer viable. Too costly. The meals are distributed by volunteers. Residents are having taster sessions on the frozen meals that are bought in. So the meals are delivered frozen to Ingrams Meadow, which are then distributed to Silvermead / Ingrams Meadow via the volunteer route. (Other sheltered sites too).

- Ian Aldridge
 - Some mixed living in sheltered sites. Recognised as a good way of integrating disabled and or vulnerable people into an assisted living arrangement. Vulnerable tenants looking after each other.
 - Some local authorities rent specific properties to assist vulnerable people. (Targeted by need – i.e. alarmed safe-house for domestic violence families). There are some used for this purpose in West Somerset, but obviously they need to be low profile to protect the occupants.
 - No wider consultation with NHS regarding proposed developments. Usually link up with NHS regarding existing tenants and specialist requirements. Trying to minimise bed blocking, health improvements etc. There is room to improve on this and Tony Murray welcomed the opportunity to do this. Future consideration to be given to liaise with NHS before development plans are drawn up.

To receive an annual report from Tony Murray, Director of Magna West Somerset Housing Association – **SEE ATTACHED**

4. Police Report – Sharon Baker (Partnership Officer) Works alongside Daniel Bishop

The most recent crime figures were verbally advised.

- Ian Aldridge
 - Rural crime. Organised crime tends to move into an area. There is no forecast for number plate recognition in the WWQV at the moment. It's a pity that this can't be rolled out more widely.
 - Asked whether 101 response times have improved, especially for crimes involving speeding, and other auto related crimes? Sharon Baker responded that there are better response times and that operational teams are made aware of incidents as they occur, so that they can target resource to those areas.
 - Any chance the Norton Fitzwarren Speed Camera could be reinstated? David Peakes replied that speed cameras have now moved towards the mobile unit on a circuit, rather than using a fixed camera like the one at Norton Fitzwarren. Police enforcement and road safety disbanded due to budget restrictions and changing technology. This was considered a more cost effective and targeted method of prevention.
- Loretta Whetlor
 - What plans are in place to replace the outgoing Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator? Sharon Baker advised that position was important, so although nothing done at the moment, it was unlikely to be left vacant. National crime prevention programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, Pub Watch and Farm Watch are currently very much in the public profile as part of national awareness schemes.

6. Highways Report

- Resurfacing and potholes work currently being undertaken.
 - East Quantoxhead. Works hampered due to the inclement weather, but completed before Storm Gareth arrived.
 - Culvert being repaired at Skilgate, due to a hole in the road.
 - Black Arch Bridge – Major works which have occurred due to the bad weather of March 2018. New culverts, reconstruction of road and resurfacing. It can't be done 24hours due to the drainage and H&S. Due to finish on the 31st.

David Peakes forwarded a list of other ongoing SCC works for the WWQV Area. (Attached)

- Loretta Whetlor
Clearing of blocked drain at junction of Liddymore Road and Quantock Road. – **ACTION POINT David Peakes to investigate**
- David Westcott
Minehead Office will no longer be available for public use. All calls will now be fielded to County Hall. It will be a depot facility only.
- Ian Aldridge
 - Lots of diversion signs which are confusing. It's useful to know where the obstruction actually occurs so that you can use a bit of local knowledge to get around it. David Peakes explained that this is because diversions must be on a like-for-like basis. A road / A road and similar situations.
 - Culvert in Williton which causes a lot of flooding. Is this something that the Somerset Rivers Authority can address? The SRA was established to pick up the areas that aren't managed by the EA and the Public Drainage Boards. This is why Monksilver has had some resource allocated to it. (Possibly 100k?) Williton is likely to be managed and delivered by the EA. This was recognised by the EA who stated that a flood alleviation scheme was required. There has been no further progress since this was identified in 2002.

7. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Not present.

8. Somerset West and Taunton Council

- Sam Murrell advised:
 - Recruitment for the new Council is ongoing. There have been sweeping changes in recent weeks with a large number of staff leaving the organisation, and others moving to new roles. Gordon Tizzard stated that he wanted a list of the new staffing structure so he knew where reporting lines and contact points were for the future. Sam Murrell advised that these were

not available at present, because the changes were still ongoing. (The first point of customer contact should be the Customer Services number or the website). Gordon expressed disappointment and frustration at the time it had taken to acknowledge a recently submitted planning application. His comments were noted.

- The new CEO James Hassett had been appointed since the previous Area Panel meeting, and was now firmly in post. He had made it clear to all staff that he had no intentions to close West Somerset House. He acknowledged that this was best way to ensure that even the most remote households could access a Council building within a reasonable travelling distance.
- Purdah had come into effect on the 18th March and would run until the day of the elections (May 2nd). Sam advised that the election count would take place at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton that evening. Was likely to finish the following morning.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

(18th June provisionally booked)