

Minehead Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 5 December 2018 In The Exmoor Room, The Old Hospital, The Avenue, Minehead

Present:

Cllr Jean Parbrook (Chair)	Minehead Town Council and West Somerset Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	Somerset County Council and West Somerset Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Benet Allen	West Somerset Council
Cllr Sandra Slade	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Andrew Parbrook	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Maureen Smith	Minehead Town Council and WSCLT and TMA
Cllr Paul Bolton	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Gail Everett	Minehead Town Council
Sgt Daniel Bishop	Avon & Somerset Police
Sgt Jen Atkinson	Avon & Somerset Police
Chris Jones	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue
Stephen Heard	Minehead Chit Chat
Lewis Lintern	MATA/The Avenue Methodist Church
Craig Palmer	Gateway Events
Mimi Palmer	Gateway Events
Sandra Davidson	Resident
Pete Broom	Resident
R Cuddy	Resident
Colin Isherwood	Resident
H Compton	Observer
Stephen Brown	Resident
Bridget O'Brien	Resident
Paul Johnson	Resident
Lin Reed	Resident
Beccy Brown	West Somerset Council
Sam Murrell	West Somerset Council
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Jean Parbrook welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Katrina Midgeley (Engage and MCCT), David Peake (Somerset County Highways), Doug Ross (Resident), Elaine Ross (Resident), Ray Tew (Minehead Development Trust and Minehead Information Centre).

2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Issues for Have Your Say, were as follows:

- (a) *Craig Palmer asked what was happening with regards to the future ownership of Blenheim Gardens:* Andy Hadley explained that an application had been made by Minehead Town Council (MTC) to take over the running of Blenheim Gardens and also Parks Walk. These had been put on hold. The application made by MTC to take over Wellington Square was moving forward and Jean added that it would be discussed at the Town Council

meeting in December. Andy further explained that Jane Souter, the Council Officer involved in the process, was due to leave the Council in March 2019 and was trying to get put everything in place before she left. It was hoped that there may, if needed, be the possibility of putting her leaving date back.

- (b) *Maureen Smith expressed concern regarding community assets being sold off and used for commercial purposes, such as the community centre in Alcombe and the skills and learning centre in Holloway Street:* Andy Hadley clarified that the Childrens Centre in Alcombe was owned by West Somerset Council and leased through Somerset County Council at a peppercorn rent. There was no intention to sell it and negotiations were ongoing with community groups to use it for community purposes. Christine Lawrence added that Somerset County Council had sold both sites of the Skills and Learning Centre at the top of Holloway Street.
- (c) *Harold Compton asked why Blue Badge parking had been restricted in The Avenue near the shoe repair shop, Old Hospital and The Avenue Methodist Church:* Mandy Chilcott explained that there were two areas in The Avenue where no parking/loading/unloading was possible due to double yellow lines and blips. The first area had been done before she was a County Councillor so she was unable to comment on this. However the second area – opposite the bus stop – had been put in place to ensure a free flow of traffic and to make it safer for pedestrians crossing.

Harold asked for the Police's view on the legality of parking where there were blips and double yellow lines. Sgt Daniel Bishop explained that parking was not allowed but that it was a parking enforcement issue and not a police matter. The police would only get involved if the vehicle parked was causing an obstruction.

Mandy advised that a full review of parking in Minehead was to be undertaken by Somerset County Council as part of a countywide review. This would include residents parking and involve a public consultation. The timescale was not known at present, but Mandy had asked for an early review. She was happy to take emails regarding parking and pass them onto the County Council officers.

Jean reported that she was Chair of the WSC Task and Finish Group and they had been told about the parking review for Minehead. It should look at encouraging people to use the car parks, which are under-utilised. Jean clarified that Somerset County Council owned the on-street parking and the Station car park and West Somerset Council owned the other public car parks.

Lewis Lintern, representing The Avenue Methodist Church, informed the meeting that the parking restriction outside the Church was causing problems for elderly people attending the Church who were unable to cross the road and for funerals and weddings as hearses and wedding cars were unable to park. Permission needed to be sought in advance for events such as these, but this was proving difficult, particularly as funerals may be needed with very little notice. He had written to Somerset County Council, but had been advised to take the matter up with the District Council. He had therefore written to WSC and was awaiting a response. Mandy agreed to talk to Lewis after the meeting.

Stephen Heard felt that the town centre should be pedestrianised.

- (d) *Sandra Slade expressed concern with the treatment of recycling bins in Hayfield Road. With the school at one end and the children's centre at the*

other, there was much double parking. When the bins were emptied however, they were just returned to the pavement in an ad-hoc fashion, causing problems for pedestrians, particularly prams/pushchairs and wheelchairs and in windy weather easily became a traffic hazard on the road. She asked if the bins could please be returned to their respective homes: Paul Johnson said that in Warden Road the bins were put behind the walls of the front gardens and Jean said this was the practice in Poundfield Road. Jean advised that she sits on the Scrutiny Committee of the West Somerset Waste Partnership Group and a meeting was due to be held on 6 December. She would bring the issue up at the meeting.

ACTION: Jean Parbrook to raise the issue of emptied bins being left all over the pavement in Hayfield Road by the refuse/recycling collectors and to ask if they could please be returned to their respective properties.

- (e) *On behalf of Bridget O'Brien, Jean asked if there had been any progress on the proposed pedestrian crossing for Bircham Road, near the West Somerset College: Christine Lawrence reported that it was still in the pipeline but there was no timescale for it. Flashing (wigwag) lights were to be installed in Washford near Old Cleeve First School. These lights were a higher priority than the College crossing and had taken about 12 years to reach this point.*
- (f) *A resident asked about the Blenheim Gardens Café tenancy. Andy Hadley explained that the Café had come up for a rent review and a meeting had been held with proprietors of the café. The proposed rent was too expensive and negotiation had taken place. However, the proprietors had decided not to continue with the café, and although the lease did not run out until March 2019 the café had been closed in October. Work needed to be done to the building and then it would be the intention to re-let it before the start of the new season. He was unaware of the rent figure.*

It was noted that the rents had increased on the industrial units in Dulverton. Andy explained that this was because they had been subject to a below market rent, but with Councils needing to be more commercially aware rent reviews had taken place leading to more realistic rent values.

- (g) *Colin Isherwood asked whether there was any response from Butlins regarding whether a residents pass for cinema use only could be set up, following the promise of Butlins employees to look into this at the Minehead Area Panel meeting in June. Sarah had recently emailed John Whybrow and Paul Dabner from Butlins to ask for a reply to this question and would let Colin and the Panel know when a response had been received.*

ACTION: Sarah to follow up with Butlins whether a residents pass for cinema use only could be set up.

- (h) *Colin Isherwood requested clarification on the traffic movement figures for 2017 as given in the minutes of the September meeting. Sarah had emailed David Peake with this request and it had been hoped that David would be present at the meeting in order to address this. Once a response had been received from David, Sarah would let Colin and the Panel know.*

ACTION: Sarah to obtain clarification on the traffic movement figures for 2017 from David Peake.

David has responded and clarified that the figures are daily averages.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2018

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

Matters Arising

Item 2(d) - Frankie Elson had expressed concern regarding the litter being thrown out of cars along Moor Road and out onto the moor and the 'boy racers' who sped along this route on a daily basis, with no care for pedestrians or other road users. The residents in this area picked up the rubbish, but what was more worrying were the speeding drivers. He had talked to Exmoor National Park rangers and they did what they could about the litter but their resources were limited. Nicole added that she had reported fly tipping to the Park. Jean agreed to write to Exmoor National Park about both issues. Jean reported that she had written to the Exmoor National Park Authority. She had not received a response.

Gail Everett had suggested that a letter be sent to the Schools to ask them to speak to the children about not dropping litter and getting rid of it in bins or taking it home to dispose of it later. Jean agreed to write to the Schools. Jean reported that she had written to the Schools.

Item 4 - Steven Heard to check whether any of the decorative shells had been removed from the seafront. Steven advised that only one had been removed and had been put back.

Item 7 - Paul Johnson had reported overhanging branches obscuring the left hand pole of traffic lights at Dunster Steep. David Peake had agreed to look into it. As David was not present at the meeting, it was agreed to keep this as an action.

ACTION: David Peake to look into the issue of overhanging branches obscuring the left hand pole of traffic lights at Dunster Steep.

Item 7 – Road Traffic Order for Warden Road for 12 metres of double yellow lines on Warden Road and 6 metres either side of the junction along Alexandra Road. Paul Johnson advised that the works had been done.

The agenda items were then re-arranged, as follows:

4. District Council Update

Beccy Brown and Sam Murrell introduced themselves as Locality Engagement Leads covering the Minehead area within the newly formed Council, Somerset West and Taunton (replacing West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council). They had only been post since 1 December, but explained that their new roles would involve bringing together different voluntary/community groups and individuals, plus relevant public sector and funding bodies, etc. with the aim of improving the quality of the lives of individuals and communities, thus making a difference to people, place and prosperity. Beccy gave examples of the work that she was currently involved with including increasing the amount of respite care for people with dementia in the area and the setting up of a man shed in Minehead. The idea of such a building had come over from Australia and created a space where men could socialise and discuss common issues, thus helping to prevent problems of isolation and loneliness occurring as a result of their innate tendency to be insular. A potential building has been identified along with possible funding opportunities and Beccy was working with different agencies to help support the project.

A resident asked whether Beccy and Sam would be replacing Ward Councillors as the people to go to. Beccy explained that they would be working with the

Councillors. They would also be liaising with village agents, the rural housing network, West Somerset Advice Bureau, Engage and other voluntary sector groups, Parish Councils, Area Panels, etc.

They would be working out of the Council offices in Williton and also from home and would be contactable by email and telephone.

A copy of Beccy's notes are attached.

Andy Hadley added that the public could still approach the Ward Councillors and they could be used to reach the locality officers.

5. Police Report

Sgt Daniel Bishop explained that the local Police structure had changed on 1 October and that he and Sgt Jen Atkinson covered Minehead, Watchet, Williton and Dulverton. The PCSOs acted as beat managers. There were three covering Exmoor, three covering Minehead and two covering Watchet and Williton. They played a visible role in the community and worked with partner organisations in order to solve problems. To enable the Beat Managers to be seen they travelled by car to the towns/villages and then walked or cycled around.

Dan advised that PC Joe Sanderson was now a patrol officer dealing with 999 calls. Both he and PC Sam Donati were based in the Minehead Police Station.

He emphasised that West Somerset's priorities were important and would be tackled. He encouraged people to report crimes on tel: 101, at Minehead Police Station from 10am to 6pm, or online. For extra assistance he could bid for extra officers from the 29 available to bid for.

Dan then spoke to the report that had been previously circulated (see attached). He reported that there had been no significant changes since September. Figures were:

- 81 offences of violence against the person.
- 46 thefts of property/shop lifting (about 15 per month).
- 28 public order offences.
- 17 burglaries (dwellings/outbuildings).
- 9 vehicle offences.
- 4 drug offences – possession and supply.
- 4 assaults.
- 3 robberies.
- 1 possession of weapons.

Dan further informed the meeting that he had been policing for 20 years. He started policing in Minehead on 1 October 2018 and lived between Minehead and Taunton.

Steven Heard asked what he should do about vehicles parking on pavements. Dan advised him to take a photo of the car. PCSOs could arrange for cars to be towed away and if the car had been driven off by the time the police arrived they could write to the owner.

6. Burning Issues

Chris Jones had provided an update report which had been previously circulated (see attached). He brought safety leaflets with him relating to the season.

7. County Council Update

Christine Lawrence reported the following:

- The County Council (SCC) were doing what they could to reduce the production of single use plastics.
- The library service had been redesigned with 15 libraries in smaller towns/villages looking into running community libraries. Porlock had been operating a successful community library for some years. Minehead library would remain unchanged.
- “Fit for my Future” was a strategy for how to support the health and wellbeing of all the people of Somerset by changing the way health and care services were commissioned and delivered. The strategy was being delivered through a partnership between Somerset County Council and Somerset CCG, and supported by major NHS providers. www.fitformyfuture.org.uk was an accompanying public consultation website to obtain public opinion on what people liked now about health and care services and what they would like to see.
- The Director of Public Health was looking at the increasing issue of self harm amongst young people. Young people were being encouraged to talk about self-harm and their worries and anxieties so that health professionals could try to reduce self harm by helping young people cope with the stresses of life.
- Flu jabs were available – if you haven’t had one please organise with your GP.
- Following the receipt of extra funding from Central Government, the County Councillors asked for salt/grit bins to be filled for 2018/19 winter weather. These bins would therefore be replenished within the villages and on the main roads. If it was felt that a bin was required then a bin could be applied for from SCC but a payment may need to be made for it.

Craig Palmer requested that if existing salt was solid in the bin then not to just add new salt on top. Mandy Chilcott advised that salt and molasses were put in the bins, the molasses kept the salt from solidifying for longer. Christine added that in the event of extreme weather, such as occurred in March of this year, all resources would be brought in to play.

- Following concerns about the stream at Alcombe Combe, by the Britannia Inn, a team had gone out and looked into it. The flow rate of the stream was fine and the grill would be improved. It was not the right time of year to remove the foliage. Individuals also had riparian right to parts of the stream, but there was concern that they were not always able to look after it, so Minehead Town Council had been asked to consider what they could do to assist. There was news of a new fast growing plant in the stream; a Town Council grounds maintenance officer would be asked to look into it.

Steven Heard advised that the path between Ellicombe roundabout and Dunster was in poor condition with overgrown plants so he found it difficult to use his scooter on the path and travelled on the road, which annoyed drivers. He also said that there was a hump along the pavement on Seaward Way which caused problems with his scooter. Mandy Chilcott said she would talk to him about these issues after the meeting.

8. Minehead Coastal Community Team – An Update

A written report had not been made available prior to the meeting, but if a report was produced it would be circulated to everyone.

9. Minehead Development Trust/Minehead Information Centre – An Update

Ray Tew had provided a written report which was circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached).

10. Town Council Update

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting (see attached).

11. Highway Matters

A report was not available.

12. Any Other Business

Free Parking

Andrew Hadley reported the following:

- After 3pm the North Road car park would be free until the end of December 2018.
- Free Parking Day in all West Somerset Council car parks would be held on 22 December 2018. This would not include the car park by the railway station which was County Council owned and did not include on-street parking.

13. Dates & Venues of Future Meetings

Future meeting to be held on:

Wednesday, 13 March 2019 at 6.30pm at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Minehead.