

County Council
Wednesday 21 July 2021
10.00 am The McMillan Theatre,
Bridgwater TA6 4PZ



SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The Members of the County Council

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Item 3a	Chair of Council's Schedule (Pages 3 - 20) Meeting business plan and public and elected member questions.
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Democratic Services, B3, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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CHAIR'S SCHEDULE AND MEETING BUSINESS PLAN

County Council Meeting – Wednesday 21 July 2021 (10.00am)

The Vice Chair of Council, Cllr Keating, to welcome everyone to the meeting of the County Council. Cllr Keating to:

- **Explain his role today as Chair of the meeting and provide an update on the Chair of Council.**
- **Remind everyone that in line with legal requirements this meeting is being held face to face and that the McMillan Theatre was the only available suitable venue. Reassurance to the audience that planning for the meeting layout and attendance today has been based on adherence to reducing the risks of infection.**
- **Remind all present that there you must wear a face mask when walking around the theatre, but it can be removed once you are sat down.**
- **Explain that it is only the County Councillors present that are taking the decisions at the meeting - officers in attendance are there to provide advice to the Council**
- **Due to the meeting location for one meeting only we have reverted to printed agendas and reports. The agenda and papers have been published on the council's website in advance of the meeting and the Council will be making an audio recording of the meeting and this will be published on the Council's website in due course.**
- **Explain that there are no planned fire drills today and in the event of a fire alarm please follow the fire exit signs and congregate in the car park. If anybody present might need assistance in exiting the building, then please let one of the Democratic Services team know.**
- **If Members wish to speak please raise your hand, the Monitoring Officer and County Solicitor will note your name and when it comes to your turn a Democratic Services colleague will bring you a roaming microphone. Microphones will be cleaned between each use.**
- **Please only speak when invited to address the Council.**
- **Please say your name before speaking.**
- **Highlight that whilst the room is safely air conditioned, anyone present may remove their jackets for their own comfort**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Guide Time:10.02am

The Vice Chair will invite the Monitoring Officer will announce any apologies for absence:

Cllr John Clarke, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr Dean Ruddell, Cllr Nigel Taylor, and Cllr Gemma Verdon

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Guide Time:10.04am

The County Solicitor will read out any prejudicial interests that have been declared by Members in relation to the business on the agenda.

Members are reminded that if any business of the Council relates to or affects a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest which you have declared you should disclose it at the meeting not later than the start of that consideration of the business in which you have an interest or (if later) the item at which the interest becomes apparent to you, you should leave the room whilst the business is being considered.

3. MINUTES

Guide Time: 10.06am

To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes together with the Appendix attached of the Council meeting held on 5 May 2021, and if agreed, the Chair will sign the Minutes as a correct record.

4. Chair of Council's announcements

Guide Time: 10.10am

Alan Wedderkopp

I am very sorry to have to report the recent passing of Councillor Alan Wedderkopp. Cllr Wedderkopp was elected to Somerset County Council in 2013 to represent the Comeytrowe and Trull Division. During his service on the Council, he served as the Opposition spokesperson for Customers and Communities with a particular interest in Children and Families, Climate Change, as well as in County Highways and the Somerset Rivers Authority. He was also elected to the Wilton and Sherford Ward on Somerset West and Taunton Council in May 2019. Cllr Wedderkopp had served on the former Taunton Deane Borough Council for 12 years as a local councillor representing Comeytrowe Ward. During his service at Taunton Deane Borough Council, he served for a time as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership.

Cllr Wedderkopp had worked in the oil industry where he had been a drilling supervisor on land and offshore projects worldwide for over 30 years. Before that he was a regular soldier in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and spent two years on active service in Korea. Since his retirement, he has been an active member of his community. We will all miss him. I now invite members and senior officers of the Council to indicate if they wish to pay tribute.

I now invite the Council to rise to observe a period of one minute silence.

Chair to then make a statement and presentation regarding the Superintendent Mike Prior presentation. Chair to invite members and senior officers to indicate if they wish to pay tribute.

Chair to refer to any public events undertaken since the last meeting.

4a PUBLIC QUESTION TIME **Public Questions / Statements**

Note: The questions / statements / public petitions submitted by each member of the public are detailed in **Annex A to this Schedule**.

Vice Chair to then invite all public speakers registered to address the Council and highlight that there will be a slight delay before speakers address the meeting. Each speaker reminded that they have up to 3 minutes to make any key points and to try and not repeat points made by other speakers on the same matter.

Vice Chair to highlight that every member has access to the statements and questions that have been submitted and therefore speakers may wish to summarise their key points and focus their available time to put their question(s) to the Council.

Members are reminded that there will be no debate on Public Questions

Invite Public Speakers in the following order:

Eva Bryczkowski – invite Cabinet Member Cllr Huxtable to reply

Emma King – invite Cabinet Member Cllr Huxtable to reply

Sigurd Reimers- invite Director of Finance Jason Vaughan to reply

Nigel Behan Not attending – invite Cabinet Member Cllr Purbrick to reply

Susannah Clemence – invite Cabinet Member Cllr Woodman to reply

Our last registered speakers are not attending – Laura & Brian Sørensen – invite Cabinet Member Cllr Woodman to reply

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD 2020- Guide Time: 10.55am 21

The Vice Chair to invite Cllr Chilcott, Cllr Frances Nicholson and Julian Wooster to introduce and present the report and proposals.

Vice Chair to invite any questions from members. Following debate, the Vice Chair to highlight the recommendations on pages 25-26, which are to be proposed by Cllr Chilcott, seconded by Cllr Redman. Vice Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

Recommendations:

The Corporate Parenting Board requests;

- 1. That Council recommends a focus on the inconsistency of Council Tax exemption across the county and the impact of this on Care Leavers.**
- 2. That Council supports and promotes a whole Council approach to create practical and specific offers to Care Leavers through our Local Offer and the Care Leaver Covenant.**
- 3. That Council supports and promotes a Care Leavers Guaranteed Interview Scheme for all care leavers of any age, where the essential criteria of the job are met.**
- 4. That Council extend its thanks to the Somerset Care Council's young people for all the hard work that they undertake.**

6. REPORT OF THE LEADER AND THE CABINET – for decision

Guide Time: 11.10am

The Vice Chair of Council will ask the Leader of the Council to introduce the report and to highlight that the debate and votes on for Papers A and B will be dealt with separately.

Paper A - The Business Plan for Somerset County Council until 2023

Vice Chair to invite any questions from members. Following debate, the Vice Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 88, which are to be proposed by Cllr Fothergill and seconded by Cllr Chilcott. Vice Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

The Council is recommended to:

- a) approve the Business Plan for formal adoption as the Business Plan for Somerset County Council until 2023; and**
- b) note that the business plan is flexible enough to continue as the strategic direction for authority until April 2023, conscious of, but not dependent upon any potential vesting day as a result of a Local Government Reorganisation decision being made.**

Paper B - Treasury Management Outturn Report 2020/21

The Vice Chair of Council will ask Cllr Chilcott to introduce the report and to take subsequent questions. Following debate, the Vice Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 88, which are to be proposed by Cllr Chilcott and seconded by Cllr Leyshon.

The Council is recommended to:

- Endorse the Treasury Management outturn report for 2020-21**

7. REPORT OF THE LEADER AND CABINET – items for information

Guide Time: 11.30am

To receive a report by the Leader of Council summarising key decisions taken by him and the Cabinet since the last Council meeting and for elected members to ask questions of the Leader and Cabinet Members and to consider the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

Member Questions (set out in Annex A) to the Leader and Cabinet Members will be taken under this item in the following order:

- **Cllr David Fothergill**
- **Cllr Mandy Chilcott**
- **Cllr John Woodman (to respond to Cllr Redman’s question)**
- **Cllr Frances Nicholson**
- **Cllr Christine Lawrence**
- **Cllr David Hall**
- **Cllr David Huxtable (to present his annual report)**
- **Cllr Faye Purbrick**
- **Cllr Clare Paul**

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Guide Time: 11.55am

Vice Chair of the Council to introduce the Audit Committee Chair, Councillor Mike Lewis to present the report. The Council is asked to note the report.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE

Guide Time: 12.05pm

Vice Chair to invite Cllr John Thorne to introduce the Committee’s report. The Council is asked to note the report.

10. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

Guide Time: 12.15pm

Vice Chair to invite Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey to introduce the Committee’s report. The Council is asked to note the report.

11. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

Guide Time: 12.25pm

Vice Chair to invite Cllr Leigh Redman to introduce the Committee's report. The Council is asked to note the report.

12. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE-

Guide Time: 12.35pm

Vice Chair to invite Cllr Anna Groskop to introduce the Committee's report. The Council is asked to note the report.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Guide Time: 12.45pm

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Vice Chair to recommend passing a resolution having been duly proposed and seconded under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded during the remainder of the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information of the following description:

Information relating to any individual

Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

14. Report of the Special Members Panel - Senior Leadership Team Restructure

Guide Time 12.50pm

The Chair of the Special Members Panel to introduce the report and the Chief Executive and HR Director to respond to any member questions.

Chair to request a proposer and seconder for the recommendations.

Council to debate the proposals and following debate the Chair to put the proposals to a vote.

Finish 1.00pm

Public Questions			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
PQ1	Eva Bryczkowski	Closure of St Andrews Ward in Wells	<p>Those among us who are concerned about the Clinical Commissioning Group's, (CCG), decision to close St Andrews Ward in Wells are aware that Somerset County Council, (SCC), is not a provider of mental health services. But, if we are not mistaken, SCC has close links with the CCG and are committed to ensuring that mental health services across Somerset are delivered in the best way possible. Speaking for myself I think that the CCG, working with agencies such as Mind in Somerset, our Local Authority, Alzheimer's Society, have a fairly good vision regarding meeting the needs of people who use mental health services. One in four people has or will experience mental health issues during their lifetime.</p> <p>As a user of mental health services, myself, the service I have received has been second to none. The meetings with my consultant and other members of the team at the Bridge in Wells, (which is on the same site as St Andrews ward), have been very much a partnership regarding ways forward in treatment. There is a transparency in all respects. For example, in formulating clear care plans. My condition is well maintained, we decide together what is the best medication according to the latest research, and other aspects of healing.</p> <p>Nevertheless, not all of the CCG's vision and mission is being fulfilled in Mendip, particularly in Wells. The Clinical Commissioning Group has decided to close St Andrews Ward in Wells and move the individuals to Yeovil, many against their will. Geographically, Mendip is a large area spanning such towns as Frome, and all the way to Street. There was a consultation regarding whether people wanted the Ward to move to Yeovil or stay in Wells. The majority wanted the ward to remain in Wells. However, the respondents who lived in Wells and nearby areas were considered by the CCG to be biased.</p> <p>A big part of the CCG's vision and aims, are about the vital importance that people who receive mental health services across Somerset are delivered in the best way possible for mental health users and "We are committed to delivering support closer to home".</p> <p>Elsewhere, the Somerset Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Team it states that, "In designing and delivering our future mental health services we are committed to delivering support closer to home rooted in community neighbourhood settings and working alongside</p>

		<p>the person's own network of support."</p> <p>The CCG's decision to close St Andrews ward flies in the face of the laudable aims mentioned above. As people who are concerned about the proposed closure of St Andrews ward we would like to hope that Somerset County Council, and every individual councillor, are capable of expressing the concerns of their voters when essential public services are being removed from a particular community. This is why I will be addressing you on Wednesday the 21st of July, to ask that as a council, and as individual councillors, you will write, (or contact them in another way), to the CCG and express your concerns, or your opposition to, the complete and final removal of mental health beds from the Mendip district.</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>Does the SCC not agree that the principle of community care, decided upon when the old county mental hospitals were closed, is that mental health services are available as closely as possible to where users and their families actually live?</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>In view of the national mental health crisis, which is getting worse not better, can the SCC consider expressing its concerns at the St Andrews ward closure, asking them to reconsider?</p> <p>Those who use and have used mental health services, throughout Somerset, should be consulted properly this time, over any changes to provision. Mental health service users should have the right to be consulted over how the service is run, have the right, therefore, to a seat on all the decision making bodies, but I do wonder how mental health residents in St Andrews ward were consulted about being forcibly moved to Yeovil, further away from family and friends.</p> <p>This move can only increase their feelings of social isolation. Suicides in Somerset are sadly higher than the national average. Often grieving relatives state that when big changes are made to their family members' provision, this can sometimes, (not always), lead to a break in</p>
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			<p>communication regarding the teams that serve them, eg keyworkers. (See the Suicide Prevention Report). I am certain that such teams, and for example, keyworkers, always do their absolute best, but are often overworked due to a number of reasons, like having huge caseloads. Regarding the CCG, if councillors in SCC ask them about the proposed closure of St Andrews ward, they may give a completely different account from the people concerned about the closure, including the individuals destined to be moved to Yeovil. There are two sides to every story, and as many different perceptions as there are people. A balance needs to be maintained between different viewpoints. The best way, which serves the people of Somerset, is for SCC to listen to the views of all parties, in addition to the those expressed by the CCG. But not by another expensive consultation, which didn't work the last time. It is crucial that Somerset County Council maintains a balance, with various viewpoints, information and evidence being taken into consideration.</p> <p>Question 3</p> <p>If, apparently, those who use mental health services are at the heart of mental services provision, and consulted properly, how, specifically, were mental health residents in St Andrews ward consulted about being forcibly moved to Yeovil further away from their relatives?</p>
<u>Response – Cllr David Huxtable</u>			
PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ2	Emma King	Closure of St Andrews Ward in Wells	As you will be aware, due to letters sent out to every county councillor earlier this year, the CCG's decision to close St Andrew's ward in Wells, being the last remaining mental health ward in Mendip, is fundamentally unpopular with the majority of residents in Somerset. The CCG conducted their own consultation, ignoring the results, which were that 52% wanted the

			<p>ward to remain open. Furthermore, a petition to save the ward, whilst also building the proposed ward in Yeovil, has received nearly 2800 signatures to date.</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>With the enormous strength of public feeling on this, do councillors not now feel that it is time for them to also throw their support behind this campaign, in order to represent the people who have elected them?</p> <p>The CCG undertook their consultation and made their decision to close this ward before the covid pandemic hit. Last September, the Office for National Statistics revealed that suicide rates in England and Wales hit a two-decade high. Furthermore, according to the Guardian last week, the amount of beds in mental health units in the UK has declined by 25% over the last ten years, in spite of the fact that the number of people in touch with NHS mental health services has risen from 117,000 in January 2016 to 141,000 in March this year – a 21% increase. The number of specialist mental health beds decreased by about 1,500 during that time, NHS England data shows. The number of people in contact with mental health services who were subject to the Mental Health Act, many of whom were sectioned into residential care for their own or others' safety, also rose over almost the same period, from 13,437 in March 2016 to 20,494 in March this year, up 53%. The loss of beds has led to a doubling in the number of patients sent on an "out-of-area placement" more than 300km (186 miles) from their home – so that they have a bed and can start being treated – from 38 in 2017 to 75 last year. There have also been two suicides in Shepton in the last month and a person in need of a mental health bed in Street has been sent to Kent, along with people in mental health crisis being regularly checked into budget hotels!</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>Taking this information into consideration, would councillors not agree that the CCG claiming that the fact that the number of beds in Somerset is not being reduced is simply an insufficient response to the looming mental health crisis caused by the pandemic and that we, in fact, need urgent provision for more vulnerable people in crisis in the county; keeping St</p>
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			<p>Andrew's ward open, reopening Phoenix ward (sister ward to St Andrew's) and building the new ward in Yeovil would surely be a good way to provide for these needs?</p> <p>The CCG claim that they have been given extra funding to invest in mental health care in Somerset, however, closing the ward in Wells will be an expensive procedure in itself. Additionally, having an insufficient number of beds requires people to be sent out of county in order to receive treatment; this costs the CCG money. This also prevents Somerset from being in a position to take people in from surrounding areas, such as BANES, where people are often sent to Harrogate for treatment. The CCG has, as yet, been unable to provide any solution to the transport issues which will occur for people trying to visit friends and family in Yeovil and has only suggested that they will "fund transport costs for some people to visit".</p> <p>Question 3</p> <p>Again, this looks like an expensive initiative. Would councillors not agree that it would be cheaper in the long run to keep St Andrew's ward open and invest in it rather than incur the costs of closure, transportation and sending people out of county for treatment, especially, bearing in mind, that need for mental health services is only going to increase in the coming years?</p>
<u>Response – Cllr David Huxtable</u>			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
PQ3	Sigurd Reimers	Scrutiny of the Somerset County Council	The Pensions Board has not been meeting for a long time (although I note that 10 th September is in the diary), and I am concerned that the County pension scheme is not receiving adequate scrutiny, as required under Section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and regulation 106

		<p>Pension Scheme</p> <p>of the LGPS Regulations 2013 (as amended).</p> <p>I know that the Somerset Pensions Committee operates semi-independently of the County Council, but the issue of outside scrutiny still remains. This seems to me to be particularly important with as controversial an issue as climate change.</p> <p>At a time when the problem of climate change is in other respects receiving attention by the County Council, it is worrying that the Pension Committee's policy of continued investment in fossil fuels does is not receiving independent questioning in a public setting.</p> <p>The UK Government, in its leadership of both the recent G7 summit in Cornwall and upcoming Climate summit in Glasgow in November, is highlighting the importance of meeting the UK's Paris-aligned commitments on reducing CO2 emissions. Our County's pensions policy must play its part in this.</p> <p>It is good to note that climate change has recently been added to the Pension Committee's risk register, but the policy of not considering any form of disinvestment/divestment is yet again being upheld, as is clear on page 75 of the latest annual report. Although both the Pension Committee and Brunel Pension Partnership have the technical expertise when it comes to placing investments, I would have hoped that the Pension Board would ask some searching questions around the policies underlying these investments.</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>There has been only one meeting of the Board in the past two years (5th June 2020, but with no minutes yet published), and Somerset appears to be unique amongst the nine West Country authorities within the Brunel scheme in not having a functioning Pension Board. The vague reference in the annual report (page 16) to "papers being produced and distributed" by the Board serves to underline a democratic deficit. What plans does the County Council have for rectifying this deficit?</p>
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<u>Response – Jason Vaughan</u>			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ4	Nigel Behan	Possible outcome/shape of the One Somerset Unitarization process:	<p>Which is the preferred model in relation to Local Community Networks and the Integrated Care System?</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>Will the proposed One Somerset Local Community Networks (LCN) be co-located with the same geographies of the NHS (Integrated Care System ICS– “Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships that bring together providers and commissioners of NHS services across a geographical area with local authorities and other local partners to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their population. The central aim of ICSs is to integrate care across different organisations and settings, joining up hospital and community-based services, physical and mental health, and health and social care.”) localities/Primary Care Networks (PCNs)?</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>What Governance, Accountability and Transparency arrangements will be created/developed to ensure (and in consultation with) electors/residents/service users/taxpayers/community and</p>

			voluntary organisations have meaningful input to both LCNs and the Somerset ICS?
<u>Response from Cllr Purbrick</u>			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
<u>PQ5</u>	Susannah Clemence	Funding additional projects due to grant applications	<p>I hear that SCC are looking ahead to finance complex road improvement schemes, some focused-on Taunton.</p> <p>Glastonbury is an example of a lively, popular Somerset town, with roads radiating all round to villages and other towns, some within a mile or so - inaccessible to any on foot, cycle or mobility scooter due to lack of footways, poor maintenance where they do exist, high speeds, and unregulated large vehicles overspilling the carriageways on rural and village roads.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>delivery drivers have to drive to the legal speed limit to fulfil quotas set by computer algorithm - I was overtaken on a blind corner by an impatient delivery driver, while driving safely behind a cyclist on the Glastonbury-Meare road on a recent Sunday morning</p> <p>on a bus Wednesday 14th July, via Croscombe to Shepton Mallet, I was watching the pavement, thinking I might cycle the route in future. The bus met a longer semi-trailer vehicle, one of many large HGVs routed along this road to Wells. In order to pass, the double decker bus had to mount the pavement. I don't think I will be cycling that way.</p> <p>trying to cycle along the road from West Pennard to Glastonbury, I gave up as it's too fast and the lorries too big. I got off and tried pushing my bike, using the pavement. I tripped and nearly fell in the road, as my feet tangled in brambles that lie at ground level; my face was scratched by eye-height branches, my legs stung by nettles, and the bicycle snagged in the hedges - either I or the bike had to go on the road. It was actually less hazardous to walk on the road than the pavement - at least the drivers stopped for me. No wonder so many parents have to drive their children to the school at Edgarley.</p> <p>the Glastonbury to Butleigh road is a natural route for a circular walk back from the Brue. I have to carry the dog though, due to high speed vehicles. Again, trip hazards make this very</p>

			<p>dangerous.</p> <p>A colleague reports that he cannot allow his teenage son to cycle or walk from Compton Dundon to visit friends in Street - a distance of under 3 miles, because the road is lethal. Young and old are suffering from poor health, social isolation and stress because Somerset's motor traffic is impeding actual physical communication.</p> <p>Here are some suggestions for immediate, cheap action:</p> <p>Find and implement low-tech, low-cost, quick route improvements, such as path-clearing, speed limits, and regulating lorry size.</p> <p>Make Glastonbury accessible by rail, by introducing a regular, well-timed, swift bus service from Castle Cary (as happens during the Festival), to cut car numbers. Publicise this!</p> <p>Support with publicity a month of action in September, to encourage everyone to use active travel, or at least to make it easier for each other to do so: Legtember.</p> <p>And please include in your pothole reporting system, a way to say "thank you", when things are fixed!</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>What will SCC do right now, so that it's easier, safer and more appealing to walk, cycle, use mobility aids to get around, especially in between Somerset's towns and villages?</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>How can we feed back our acknowledgement and gratitude to the councils for the things they do fix, like unblocking the drains that create dangerous puddles, and clearing overgrown footways?</p>
<u>Response Cllr John Woodman</u>			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ6	Laura and	Clearing of	Since March 2020 a small group of volunteers have taken it upon themselves to clear

	Brian Sørensen	vegetation from shared/multi-use paths in Glastonbury and the intention of the council in the future	<p>overhanging vegetation from shared paths in Glastonbury. It became clear that there was appetite from the general public, including children, to use these paths more often during Lockdown, for cycling and walking, but in some parts they were impassable because of brambles and other hazards which had not been cleared for some time. We did several paths in Glastonbury and recently the A39 bypass up to the Tin Bridge Roundabout has been the focus. We attracted many other volunteers who joined us from time to time. People who saw us at work were very grateful and an elderly gentleman moved slowly past us on his mobility scooter one day, stopped, and looked up to say it was the first time he had been able to get around the corner for a very long time.</p> <p>We sent emails and photographs to SCC of the difference we were making and asked for their support and collaboration. We had discovered that they have legal responsibility for the upkeep of these paths. We understood that both central and local government were keen for people to try and reduce car use and use other non-motorised, non-polluting forms of transport.</p> <p>In October we managed to get a council officer to attend, walk the path with us and have a conversation. Several promises were made that day regarding keeping in touch, possibly getting the probation service to help, featuring our work on the council social media and putting us in touch with other volunteer groups who did similar work. None of this happened and subsequent emails went largely unanswered.</p> <p>Having carried on for over 15 months our group decided to stop cutting back the brambles because we were so disillusioned with the lack of communication and dismissive behaviour from SCC. The thorny brambles are now all over the path again and members of the public have taken their secateurs to the longer brambles, but left the branches on the path which is dangerous, especially to bicycle tyres.</p> <p>The Council signed a Climate Emergency, knows the necessity of getting people to leave their cars at home, have produced glossy documents regarding creating these vital shared paths, but has failed to maintain the ones we have.</p> <p>Question 1</p> <p>Who in the council is going to take charge of this issue and properly liaise with willing and</p>
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			<p>able members of the public who do the right thing in this regard, and when as we have done thousands of pounds worth of work for the council and feel this deserves some sort of acknowledgement and who is going to answer our questions with honesty and integrity about why the paths have been so neglected, and when?</p> <p>Question 2 When are SCC going to embrace a culture change which means that they show a sincere willingness to engage with those who help, in a positive, professional and friendly manner?</p> <p>Question 3 We also would like to ask if they will cut back the overhanging vegetation and clear the kerb from the area by the Northload Roundabout near Glastonbury Reclamation as it is impossible to use the road crossing here and is dangerous for us to do the work - if we ever decide to do it again. Volunteers are the life blood of this country and would appreciate being treated with respect, courtesy and some appreciation.</p>
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Response Cllr John Woodman

MEMBER QUESTIONS

MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
MQ1	Cllr Leigh Redman	Funding additional projects due to	I am pleased to see so many of our existing highways projects benefiting from multiple government funds, particularly as we had already ring fenced SCC or EDFe funds, can the cabinet member provide details of how many projects have been or are in the pipeline for

		grant applications	multiple funding, and provide details of the additional projects that will benefit because of the extra funding?
<u>Response Cllr John Woodman</u>			