

Full Council Meeting – 28 March 2023

Portfolio Holder Report for Community – Cllr Chris Booth.

Annual Report

I would firstly like to thank the incredible staff I have worked with since 2019. It's been an honour to see how hard they work to ensure the lives of residents in Somerset West and Taunton are better. Thank you also for all the support you have provided me. I truly hope you all go on to do great things at Somerset Council or whatever your next role is. Hopefully you will all know who you are.

I would also like to thank the councillors and members of the Executive for their support and I hope I have been able to keep you informed and updated when you've required so.

One Teams - The long-established One Teams across our district have helped to make a vital difference to many residents over the years by bringing together partners in the same room. It's been wonderful to see how many of the teams have grown in that time and taken the lead in improving their respective areas and the lives of local residents. We've also had officers working across different communities where there are no one teams who have also been fantastic in working with local partners and organisations.

Somerset West Lottery - This has been a real success in supporting many local community groups and organisations across our area and administered exceptionally by Christine Gale with additional incentives added through the year to encourage the public to take part. In 2022, £22,000 was given to local community organisations, ranging from youth provision to sports clubs. I hope the residents of Sedgemoor and South Somerset will see the benefits of this model being implemented across the county.

Voluntary Grants - We undertook a review in 2021 to make sure correct amounts of voluntary grants were being given out to organisations and the correct scrutiny was being undertaken. I believe this means that we set this in good stead going into the new authority. We gave nearly £230,000 in grants this financial year. Many thanks also to Spark Somerset for supporting local voluntary organisations.

Other Grants - I am very proud we allocated £50,000 to help residents struggling with bills last year and the year before we allocated £250,000 to support community groups impacted by the pandemic.

Community Employment - We have a fantastic team arranging employment hubs and other events across the district to help residents get back in work, into training more into local employers. This often goes under the radar but we should really thank them for the many events arranged over the years to help so many residents.

CCTV

I am happy that we have upgraded the cameras in Taunton and got the cameras working in West Somerset again. Cameras no longer being used in Taunton but still in a good condition will be deployed to Minehead. I hope going forward the CCTV will be equalised for the better across the county. Thanks in particular to Scott Weetch for driving for results and putting up with my constant questions.

Pantries - Thank you to Helen Phillips for leading in collaboration with partners to help create the first food pantry in our area at Rowbarton Methodist Church. This has helped inspire others to set up around the district by other organisations, often with Helen's help, in places like Rockwell Green and Minehead. Hopefully the plans for others in other parts of the district will come to fruition.

Outside Bodies - I've been truly blessed to have sat on many bodies and encountered some truly inspiring people who work so hard for the betterment of Somerset. There are too many people to name so I will mentioned the bodies I've sat on since 2019:

- Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Panel
- Hinkley Point C Grants Panel
- Somerset Safer Partnership
- Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board
- West Somerset Opportunity Area Fund