

ILMINSTER DIVISION COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT SEPTEMBER 2017

FIRE AUTHORITY

I have been appointed as the SCC representative on the Devon & Somerset Fire Authority

SCC - HEALTHY EATING & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SUPPORT

The new model of Healthy eating and Physical Activity support for people in Somerset is due to be in place by January 2018, with delivery transferred back to SCC to enable contribution to the savings required due to the reduction in the Public Health grant. The aim is to reduce the incidence of overweight, obesity and physical inactivity and will involve ending the one to one face to face support offered and will be replaced with a population level approach offering a range of support according the "Inform me, enable me, support me" model. Other, population based, activities from the previous service will continue in order to mitigate the impact.

Overweight and obesity are issues that affect 66.1% of adult Somerset residents. 20.1% of Somerset reception children and 28.8% of children in year 6 are overweight or obese. Based on national predictions for the wider social and economic costs of obesity, the estimated cost to Somerset in 2015 was £563.92m, including £148.4m for annual healthcare costs alone.

SCC CORPORATE PROPERTY STRATEGY & DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

Cllr. Sue Osborne attended Scrutiny to voice ongoing concerns in relation to the sale of County Farms. A task and finish group has now been set up to review proposed changes to SCC's current policy for the disposal of assets; this will include the disposal of asset holdings to be dealt with centrally. Issues were raised over the impact on individual services and any input they may have, along with concern that whilst the current policy is under review SCC are continuing with disposals.

There is a perceived of lack of clarity and transparency in the current process. So far, the disposal of surplus assets since 2008 has generated £33m. in revenue, used to support SCC's capital programme. To avoid further borrowing SCC has access to 3 sources of income - gov't grants; third party contributions (e.g. S106 money); capital receipts. Currently there is 3-year window during which central gov't will permit the use of capital receipts revenue projects e.g. transformation initiatives.

VOLUNTEERING - SPARKS

The is the new name for the voluntary sector support service following the merger of SSVCA & MCS. An approach has been made by a company that promotes improvements within the areas in which they work, where every employee is offered a volunteering or 'Lend A Hand day' each year to spend in the local community. They have previously undertaken group volunteering sessions including renovating community gardens, helping at food banks and events. They are looking at having several volunteering options from October/November onwards and estimate up to 10 people per session can do a half day or a full day. If any community group or organisation has a suitable project contact Leonie.Girling@sparksomerset.org.uk who will then pass the options on for consideration. Unit 5, Yeovil Small Business Centre, Houndstone Business Park, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8WA Office: 01935 475 914 Mobile: 07971 912452

LIBRARY SERVICE

The future of the library service across the county is under consideration. A meeting was held this month, which I was unable to attend, to establish the need for and usage of Ilminster Library, drawing on statistical evidence and local knowledge and options for improving the library through greater community involvement. Whilst no decision has yet been taken, information gathered will be used to develop a 3-year plan for the Library Service in Somerset. Under consideration is the library catchment and the need for a library in the area, usage of the library, the building, costs and current constraints.

Whilst annual visitor numbers have seen a reduction by 13.88% in the last 12 months, to 24,980, this could be linked to the reduction in opening hours. The total net cost of running the library stands at £29,768. Recommendations are due to go before Scrutiny on 3rd Oct.

SS&L (Somerset Skills and Learning) COURSES

SS&L have lost a significant grant from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. As a result of this decision, a large number of community based courses are now at serious risk. I am advised that those concerned about the implications of this should make contact with our MP, Marcus Fysh. Existing technical skills training courses and apprenticeships are not directly at risk, but there is concern that SS&L may cease trading as a result of losing 40% of its budget. SCC Officers have been asked to urgently work with SS&L to find a sustainable business model to protect these technical courses and apprenticeships.

ROAD SAFETY

An impact assessment is to be carried out for the new Road Safety Strategy for Somerset. Local highway authorities must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote and improve road safety for all. Research shows that certain groups may be more at risk and therefore some interventions may be targeted to these groups:

- Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians (including mobility users), pedal cyclists and equestrians
- Older adults
- Young drivers (16 - 24 year olds)
- Motorcyclists
- Car users and owners

HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

A new contract has been awarded to Skanska, with key changes involving a more collaborative approach. The surface dressing programme is on time and within budget. Since April 2017, 6,727 repairs have been carried out. Local communities now have the opportunity to purchase Speed Indicators Devices independently but permission in relation to siting must still be sought.

PARKING POLICY UPDATE

A further 2-year extension period has been agreed with the enforcement contractor. Note that Enforcement officers are now home based, enabling them to extend their hours of work. It has been requested that out-of-hours enforcement is increased. The Resident Parking Scheme will not now be led by local 'champions' but by SCC officers. To implement schemes, a response rate of at least 60% of residents is required, with 50% of those supporting changes to parking arrangements, which will be implemented after community consultation. The parking service currently has surplus revenue which is ring-fenced.

ROAD SAFETY

In addition to data obtained from police reports of road accidents, information is now also being gathered from local hospitals where those injured may self-refer. There is increased use of social media to get messages a wider audience.

STRATEGIC ROAD IMPROVEMENTS SCHEMES (RIS)

RIS schemes relevant to Somerset announced for the first five-year period from 2015 to 2019/20) include:

A303/A358 Improvements: Improving the A358 to dual carriageway between Southfields roundabout and the M5; and the dualling of the Sparkford to Ilchester section of the A303. These schemes are currently being progressed by Highways England.

The A303 Sparkford to Ilchester and A358 route options have been the subject of an initial 'non-statutory' round of public consultation and the Council's responses can be accessed from <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/a30-a303-a358-improvement-project/>

The A358 consultation response was considered by the Scrutiny Committee in June 2017. Highways England has confirmed they expect to make a preferred route announcement for the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester section later by October.

SCC expressed concerns about the 'single option' approach to consultation on the A358 scheme and Highways England have announced there will be a further 'supplementary' consultation on options for the proposed 'off-line' section of the route connecting the A358 near West Hatch Lane with the M5.

A preferred option will be announced for the 'on-line' section of the improvement between West Hatch Lane and Southfields junction towards the end of the year.

The Government will also set aside funding for smaller scale improvements to the A303/A30 between Southfields and Honiton to improve safety and journey quality, where large scale improvements would be challenging given the AONB status. This includes some small-scale work in the Blackdown Hills. Implementation of the proposals to upgrade the whole A303/ A358 will run beyond the first Road Period. The Government intends that subsequent Road Investment Strategies will fund remaining improvements. It is therefore important to retain an ongoing campaign for the improvements, especially in the run up to decisions on future 5 year investment programmes which will start shortly.

PLANNED HIGHWAYS WORK

Ilminster	North St./Market Sq./East St./Silver St./Ditton St., Listers Hill, Shudrick Lane	Reactive gully emptying programme.	ongoing		5 days
Cudworth	Cudworth Street	Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure.	27 Nov	15 Dec	15 days
Chaffcombe	Kingston Well Lane	Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure.	15 Jan	19 Jan	5 days
Cudworth	Cudworth Street & Knights Lane	Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closure.	06 Feb	09 Feb	4 days

SIS MEETING – DONYATT

After a site meeting this month, there have been some positive developments in relation to resolving concerns over traffic speeds and pedestrian safety through the village.

ILMINSTER TRAFFIC ISSUES

A number of local incidents in recent weeks has given cause for concern, in particular the collision involving an HGV at the junction by Townsend, where the use of Satnav appears to have caused the problem, not for the first time. The issue of weight limits on the road between Iminster and Kingstone has also been raised.

In response highways have said, 'We are unable to ban manoeuvres for a certain length of vehicle and any banning would affect all vehicles, but this is something worth considering as you are unable to perform this without crossing the central hazard line.'

PARKING

Daido Industrial Bearing Limited, Winterhay Lane, Iminster

A request for double yellow lines on the approach to the site entrance has been requested.

Court Barton, Iminster – SCC Highways have been advised that the Town Council supports the implementation of restricted parking outside the flats opposite the accountants. In Iminster, the issue of parking restrictions on Bank Holidays, has been raised. In order to make changes to this a formal request has to be submitted to the Area Service Manager.

FINGER POST PROJECT

I have reported the negative feedback from local communities relating to the very lengthy and complicated process for their involvement and understand that revisions are being made to make the process simpler.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

Congratulations go to Winsham Parish Council on gaining a Foundation level award under the Local Council Award Scheme. The adjudication panel flagged up their website as being welcoming and professional and commented on how the Council's mission statement is reflected through the work that the Council undertakes. Other aspects which were noted were the short summaries about each Councillor.

CHARD MUSEUM

The end of season report shows that visitor numbers were up by 28%, donations up by 38% and shop sales were up by 75%, although revenue from friend's membership, is down by £500 on last year; supporters of the museum are urged to renew their membership, which is just £10 a year. The number of custodians has been reduced, meaning that opening times have had to be restricted on occasion; more volunteers are welcome. For the coming season, the museum is also looking for a new treasurer.

During the 2017 season there was increased interest from outside media on the Gillingham collection in the wake of the BBC T programme, & involvement with artist Caitlin Heffernan who specialises in making displays using textiles. This year the museum has had fifteen visits from local organisations, in addition to several visits from schools, brownies & beaver groups. The annual open day and this month's Craft & Heritage Day were well attended. The last day of the season will be Friday 27th October.

HORTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman has stood down from his post, with a new Chair yet to be appointed.

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ATTENDED

1/9	Whitelackington VH quiz
2/9	Meeting re: social care – Horton
3/9	Dowlish Wake Flower Show
4/9	SCC – Meeting with Council Leader
4/9	SCC – Highways meeting
4/9	SCC – SIS workshop
4/9	Ashill PC
5/9	SCC – Policies & Place Scrutiny
5/9	Broadway PC
9/9	Broadway Hill Coffee Morning
9/9	Whitelackington Table Top Sale
9/9	Chard Museum Heritage Craft Day
9/9	Dowlish Wake Phoenix project BBQ
9/9	Underway Meade Fund Raising Quiz
10/9	Broadway Hill Church
10/9	Donyatt VH Breakfast
11/9	Dowlish Wake PC
11/9	Donyatt PC
12/9	Iminster Lit. Fest AGM
13/9	Horton – resident meeting
13/9	Warehouse Theatre performance
14/9	Wadham School Presentation evening
15/9	Taunton College – Suicide and Mental Health event
16/9	IES – 30/70 th anniversary party
16/9	MacMillan Fund Raising event - Chard
18/9	Highways SIS meeting – Donyatt
19/9	Chard Museum – Manor Court School event
19/9	Swanmead school – SCOFF AGM
19/9	Iminster TC
20/9	SCC - Adult Health Scrutiny
20/9	SSDC – Area West - Chard
21/9	Fiveways school governor meeting
21/9	SSDC – full council
28/9	Sweet Surprise client social service meeting
28/9	SCC – Health & Wellbeing Board
28/9	SCC – meeting re: social services
30/9	Broadway Church Fund Raising Event