

## COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR DECEMBER REPORT 2017

### **ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

In recent weeks, I have been asked to intervene in a number of cases relating to adult social care within the division. I am pleased to report that I was able to achieve the placement of an elderly couple in a care home where they can be together, just 2 days before Christmas.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCIAL SETTLEMENTS**

The Government's Financial Settlement for LAs was announced recently. The Government chose not to award Pilot Business Rate Retention to Somerset, but did give it to Devon and Glos. This will mean that SCC will now have to find an additional £4m. of savings, and underlines the need for MPs to understand the progressive financial stresses that such decisions are causing. In the meantime, SCC Financial Officers are remodelling the MTFP options (Revenue and Capital).

### **SCC – DBS CHECKS**

It has now been agreed that in future all councillors will be expected to undergo DBS checks.

### **SCC SCRUTINY – POLICIES, CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

#### **A joint meeting is planned with Adults Scrutiny on Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>**

The Special Education Needs and Disabilities report indicates that SEND is more prevalent in boys and that in Somerset there is a higher % of Children Looked After with SEN

than the national average, a higher proportion with social, emotional and mental health needs. They are also three times more likely to be eligible for free school meals.

Key stage2 performance for 2016 for SEND children is below the national average as are GCSE results for English and Maths. There has also been an increase in exclusions, especially in secondary schools.

Plans in place to address these issues, as part of a multi-agency approach, include 'Choice for Life' area based panels, and a strategy to aid transition.

### **BROADBAND – CONNECTING DEVON & SOMERSET UPDATE**

The issue has been raised over the position in relation to siting of boxes. For those over 2kms. away there has been no noticeable improvement in speed. Superfast connection for Phase 1 for 270k business and homes has now been completed. No data has yet been released for Phase 2, but information is being gathered down to individual properties.

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES - OFSTED**

OFSTED have now completed their monitoring visit, with their report due in early 2018.

### **CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY**

Funding allocations relating to the new Schools National Funding formula will be discussed at the January meeting.

### **COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID**

At this month's meeting Ilminster Town Council have agreed to submit a community right to bid application for the Somerset Skills & Learning premises on Ditton Street.

### **ILMINSTER SCHOOLS UPDATE**

The planned meeting with governors, due to be held in Dec. has been postponed until the 9<sup>th</sup> Jan.

### **ROADWORKS UPDATE**

No new roadworks, not previously notified, are planned for the new year.

### **HIGHWAYS**

A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme - update on the upcoming public consultation. This will take place in Jan./Feb. with more detail due to be published on 3rd Jan. 2018.

The consultation will offer an opportunity to comment on our route options and will involve public exhibitions in the vicinity of the options. Info. will be available online and at public info. points.

visit [www.highways.gov.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields) or email [A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk)

### **ILMINSTER FLOODING UPDATE**

As promised, the initial investigation report was produced this month and will be published on the Flood Risk Management website in the new year.

In response to local enquiries about the impact of flooding on property insurance, I have been given details of an initiative named **Floodre**, set up to help those who struggle to get affordable insurance due to flooding. The link to further info. is <https://www.floodre.co.uk/>

Comments from Ilminster TC have resulted in the following revisions:

- The duration of internal flooding and also flooding of strategic infrastructure has been updated to more accurately record the circumstances.
- The information in the report comes from the historic database of flooding as reported to the Local Authority (others). As flooding is often under reported there are likely to be events missing. A note has been added to only record what they are told about, and confirmation that they are always happy to receive information to keep the historic database as comprehensive as possible.
- Reference to sewage flooding is now included.

### **FOOTPATHS**

An order for the closure of public footpath CH 6/4 in Chillington has been received. An inspection of the old bridge in the valley found that there is significant stone loss particularly to the upstream arch which could result in a collapse should it be washed out further. The closure is for 21 days and this will be extended for a further 6 months initially.

For further info. contact Rachel Pearce, Rights of Way Warden (Bridges) on 01823 356001 or by email: [rpearce@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:rpearce@somerset.gov.uk)

### **DONYATT SIS CONSULTATION**

An outline design has been completed now and highways are starting a consultation exercise to receive comments from the community. The proposal includes the relocation of the southern 30mph gateway and enhancement of all gateways, installation of centre hatching and bollards to visually narrow the carriageway, construction of two uncontrolled crossings along with tactile paving to assist the visually impaired, installation of roundels and 'SLOW' markings and vegetation clearance. The installation of countdown 9, 6, 3 yellow bar markings, retroreflective verge marker posts, new signs and the refreshment of existing lining and road markings would also be undertaken.

Due to the geographical extent of the scheme hard copies of the plans are unable to be provided to adjacent residents but they will receive a letter shortly advising them of the proposed works, stating that hard copies of the plans have been provided to the PC. Electronic copies can be found at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/small-improvement-schemes/>

A Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) has been included as an alternative to yellow backed repeaters (plan 70023646-101) but it must be noted that it is unlikely that this option will meet the criteria for installation.

**100 YEARS OF THE VOTE FOR WOMEN** – A Champagne Tea is planned to mark this event on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. at The Shrubbery.

### **PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING**

Winsham Parish Council are holding a training evening for Councillors on Thurs. Feb.22<sup>ND</sup> 2018, from 7 - 9pm at Jubilee Hall, Winsham, costing £20 per person. The training will include 'Being a Good Councillor' and the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any councillors wishing to attend should contact [winshampc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:winshampc@hotmail.co.uk) by Wed. 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 2018 at the latest.

### **ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS**

1/12	Fiveways School Governor visit
1/12	SSDC – planning officers re: local applications
1/12	Horton Christmas Tree Lighting
2/12	Donyatt Christmas Bazaar
2/12	Dillington Going Crackers
2/12	CLOKS Christmas performance
3/12	Kingstone Christingle
4/12	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – forum meeting
4/12	DSFRS – fire fighter presentation
4/12	DSFRS – interview shortlisting
5/12	SCC -Scrutiny
5/12	SCC – Broadband update
5/12	Greenfylde Nativity
5/12	Minster Tree Festival
5/12	Ilminster Town Council
6/12	SSDC Area West
6/12	Horton – Adult Social Care
6/12	Winsham PC
7/12	Donyatt Carols by Candlelight
8/12	SCC – Scrutiny for Policies, Children & Families

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8/12	Samaritans Christmas Quiz
9/12	Horton Christmas Bazaar
9/12	Broadway Christmas Quiz
10/12	Donyatt VH Breakfast
10/12	Horton Church Nativity
10/12	Ashill Christmas Fair
10/12	Dowlish Wake Christingle
12/12	Greenfylde School Nativity
12/12	Ilminster TC
14/12	Fiveways School Christmas Performance
17/12	Horton Church Christingle
17/12	Chaffcombe Christmas Lunch
17/12	Ilminster Town & Country Carol Service
18/12	Horton – Social Services
18/12	Horton PC
19/12	Neroche School Christmas Performance
19/12	SCC – Highways – Ilminster Flooding Report
12	SCC – Corporate Governance meeting
19/12	South Somerset Choral Society Concert
20/12	Ilminster – Community Service
20/12	Horton Carol Service