

COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR JANUARY REPORT 2018

SCC - LETTER TO TERESA MAY

The leader of SCC met with the five Somerset MPs this month. They have all signed a joint letter to the Prime Minister detailing the financial strain that Somerset County Council is currently suffering. 'This is the first time that SCC have secured the support of all five MPs to approach a Senior Minister in this way, working together so positively. The outcome is less certain.'

COUNTY FARMS

I met with the officer responsible for handling the disposal of County Farms to gain a greater understanding of the issues involved, and the impact this will have on the local community, and have a further meeting planned for early Feb.

JOINT SCRUTINY – Children & Families + Adults & Health

The focus of this meeting was on the health and well-being of children and young people, with particular emphasis on mental health. Committee members expressed high levels of dismay at the current level of intervention and support in place.

In Somerset during 2015/16 there were 643 10-24 year olds who had been admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm. There is also increasing concern over suicide pacts among young people. Presentations at the meeting included plans to improve the current situation. Support for pregnant women with mental health issues was also discussed. Results of an NHS funding bid are awaited.

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

At this month's meeting, plans for the over-arching strategy to 'improve the lives of Somerset residents', involving all agencies, was discussed. This also highlighted the need to retain young people in the county; currently net migration out of county is exacerbated by the lack of a university. What is acknowledged is the need for combined working, and the difficulty this poses. There is currently no 24-hour pharmacy provision in Somerset, due to lack of demand.

CARERS' VOICE

Somerset Carers' Service advice line, offering support and guidance is - 0800 31 68 600
Or text CARER TO 78070. www.somersetcarers.org.uk provides links with groups and events in the area and also assists with applications and financial support. WebChat is soon to be launched. 32 new community/carer/village agents have now been appointed, across 7 county areas.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The decisions to deliver SCC's new Family Support Service are progressing. This will join together the existing early help service, Getset and SCC's public health nursing services (health visitors and school nurses). It is intended to make it easier for children, young people and families to get the support where and when they need it and forms part of the prevention strategy.

Further information can be found by contacting publichealth@somerset.gov.uk

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT

In the face of a national social care crises the Government has allowed Local Authorities to add up to 3% to help meet the cost of providing Adult Social Care. Somerset has a significant ageing population, with Adult Social Care in the county accounting for over 40% of the total budget. The additional 3% Adult Social Care precept will enable SCC to bring forward plans to meet demand and improve the service going forward.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

For 2016/17 there were four key areas of focus, seen as the greatest risk - Early Help, Court Child Protection System, Neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation to address to shortcomings highlighted by OFSTED.

In the annual report in-depth information was provided in relation to child deaths, and those subject to child protection plans in addition to adoption and other residential placements.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES - OFSTED

OFSTED have now completed their monitoring visit. The outcome is that Children's services in Somerset require improvement to be judged good.

1. Children who need help and protection - requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence - requires improvement
 - 2.1 Adoption performance - good
 - 2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers - requires improvement
3. Leadership, management and governance - requires improvement

ILMINSTER/CREWKERNE SCHOOLS REVIEW

A meeting of Head Teachers and Governors from Crewkerne and Ilminster Schools was held this month to consider options to address the current situation, where budgets and resources are increasingly limited to enable continuation of the current 3-tier system. There was acknowledgement that whatever solution is chosen there is a need to minimise disruption, avoid school closures and ensure that the key focus is on positive outcomes for our local children. School Heads & Chairs of Governors are to set up a working group with the aim of holding 3 initial meetings before the end of the spring term.

In Ilminster division the schools that will be affected are Greenfyld and Swanmead and I remain in contact with both Head Teachers.

CARILLION COLLAPSE

SCC have said *'We are fortunate that the NIDR has been completed, although it was subject to major delays. We remain in dispute with Carillion and have robustly resisted its excessive, inflated claims for costs. We still have a substantial claim against Carillion for delays and continue to pursue this. This is a developing situation and we will be working with the official receivers to resolve this matter as soon as possible'*.

Carillion operates a joint venture partnership, with the main civil engineering contractor (Gigaclear) to deliver the full-fibre broadband network for Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS).

When awarding the broadband contract, CDS was satisfied with the robustness of Gigaclear's contingency plans and has been assured that there are a range of options available to deal with changes in circumstances affecting its sub-contractors. In light of recent developments, CDS has discussed the detail of contingency plans and options to ensure that the new publicly-funded broadband network is delivered on time and on budget.

BROADBAND UPDATE

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast Broadband Programme Phase one delivery is now complete. Additional funding has allowed SCC to extend the coverage of phase two contracts. This is being progressed through the change request process. Details are now available of the initial areas that the phase 2 contracts with Gigaclear will reach.

Ilminster falls within the Gigaclear Lot 3 roll out. The roll out schedules can be found on the following webpage <https://www.gigaclear.com/connecting-devon-and-somerset-rollout-schedule/> It is then necessary to select Lot 3. There is some coverage from Gigaclear in the Ilminster area. Those wishing to find out more can check their postcode and register their interest without obligation via <https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/>

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

The National Fire Chiefs Council has recommended that all new build schools are fitted with sprinkler systems. This is mandatory in Scotland and Wales. Currently only 5% of schools have sprinklers. Fire Safety visits, targeting elderly, vulnerable residents are ongoing.

I have been advised that a budget shortfall of 9.1m over the next three years is anticipated

As with other services across the country, further savings are required in order to be able to balance budgets while continued cuts in central government funding continue

It is also expected that the impact of potential pay rises and inflation will not be covered sufficiently by any council tax increases for the coming year.

To further increase the service's response efficiency, and to take into account difficult access conditions, a 3-tier system, utilising different sized fire engines, is being introduced over the next three years. Deployment decisions will be matched to risk, utilising new rapid intervention vehicles.

SSDC – TRANSFORMATION

The CEO gave an update on progress, outlining new job roles and service structure for the next phase of the project. Consultation with staff, unions etc. is now under way.

SSDC – MONITORING OFFICER

Following the death of Ian Clarke, Angela Watson has been designated SSDC's Monitoring Officer. A deputy will be recruited in due course.

SSDC - AREA WEST

At this month's meeting, in response to a question from a member of the public, brief information was provided on the purchase of an incinerator, sited at Bristol, to assist in addressing concerns over the high levels of disposable waste that is having a negative impact on our environment.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION BOUNDARY REPORT

Recommendations are now out to consultation. In this area, the recommendation is for Ilminster to become a 3-member District Council Ward, encompassing Neroche Ward (Ashill, Donyatt, Broadway & Horton villages). Early signs indicate that this is not something that would be welcomed by Neroche or Ilminster. Views on the proposed boundary changes should be submitted by 19th March 2018. The full recommendations and interactive maps are available on the Commission's website at consultation.lgbce.org.uk (go to South Somerset and insert your postcode).

LIBRARY SERVICE

A consultation exercise is now underway, for the next 12 weeks, on specific proposals to help shape the future of Somerset library services. Ilminster is one of the libraries under threat and a number of local residents have been in contact with me in relation to this. A series of proposals for the future delivery of library services in different areas of Somerset are set out in the decision paper and can be viewed here: <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=632>.

PACT

At this month's meeting concern was expressed over local incidents of anti-social behaviour which appear to be perpetrated by a small number of individuals known to the police.

A **What Matters/Who Cares?** event has been organised for **Mon. March 5th at The Shrubbery, 7.30pm – 9.30pm**, to explore ways in which local groups and individuals such as schools, farming, businesses, public services etc. can work together to support community issues and activities. Representatives of local community groups are urged to attend. At this month's Ashill PC meeting, agreement was reached to consider options for setting up a Local Area Partnership that may help with activities such as the installation of SIDs, winter gritting and community transport.

HIGHWAYS

Changes at the South Somerset Area Highways Office. Chris Weeks, the Assistant Highway Service Manager, has left the area highways team. Assurance has been received that it will be 'business as usual' in the Highways Office. Any correspondence previously for his attention should still be sent to countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk for action. Derek Davies has been appointed to replace Chris, starting in April. Colin Fletcher has now retired.

HIGHWAYS – PLANNED ROADWORKS

Cudworth	Cudworth Street & Knights Lane	Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closure. Dates TBC.
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HIGHWAYS - DOWLISH WAKE

Concerns remain over speeding, with the resulting danger to pedestrians at the Ilminster/Kingstone junction. Further discussion with highways is ongoing.

SID READINGS – DONYATT CHESHAYES HILL 9-23RD Jan. 2018

28,525 total vehicles 33mph ave. speed 85% at 37mph. 1581 exceeding 40mph.

SID READING – ASHILL – OLD A358 NR HARVEY WAY 9-23RD Jan. 2018

3,104 total vehicles 32 mph ave. speed 85% at 40mph 576 exceeding 40mph.

ILMINSTER FLOODING UPDATE

Since the receipt of the interim report in Dec. I have no further info. to report at the time of writing.

DONYATT SIS CONSULTATION

This is ongoing, with options being explored to achieve the best outcome for the village, within budgetary constraints.

HIGHWAYS – A358 CONSULTATION

Highways England has now launched a supplementary consultation on the A358 improvements between Taunton to Southfields, closing on Tues. 27 Feb. 2018.

Views are being sought on a number of options for the section between the M5 and the A358 at West Hatch and a single proposal of widening for the A358 between West Hatch and Southfields Roundabout on the A303.

In response to feedback from the first consultation last year HE have now included more information on the planned route and more than one detailed option for consideration.

More information and the opportunity to comment online is available through the HE website <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/a358-taunton-to-southfields>

The consultation includes public exhibition events where the public can view proposals, meet members of the project team and ask questions.

Information is also available to view at public information points, including SCC(County Hall A Block reception), SSDC (Brympton Way reception), Ilminster Meeting House and Arts Centre.

SCC timetable for response to the consultation

30 Jan: Presentation to Scrutiny outlining HE's proposals and key elements of proposed response. This meeting generated a high degree of interest and concern from the public.

Early Feb: Draft written response published on SCC website for public comment.

16 Feb: Deadline for public comment on SCC's response.

19 Feb: Formal response agreed through a non-key decision by Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy.

27 Feb: Formal consultation response submitted to Highways England.

HORTON RECREATION GROUND

Local residents made representations at this month's PC meeting to gain their support in moving forward to improve facilities. A working group has now been set up and a public meeting was well attended by local residents keen to explore options and funding opportunities.

DEFIBRILLATORS

Local residents are advised that in an emergency situation that the location of nearby defibrillators is known and communicated to whichever of the emergency services are contacted.

To register Defibrillators with SWAST, use the link below to register units in your communities.

<https://www.swast.nhs.uk/What%20We%20Do/register-your-defibrillator-with-swastft.htm>

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Since 2016 the [Children and Young People's Plan \(CYPP\)](#) has prioritised "establishing early help hubs in local communities offering multi-agency integrated services that identify and support children and families who need additional help and can intervene quickly".

The public consultation, receiving 850 responses, finished in Dec. Proposals included increased use of technology, and providing a wide network of places in local communities delivering, making use of appropriate venues, such as in families' homes, schools, health centres and village halls. The intention is for 8 Family Centres to operate within a wider community network than the existing 'Sure Start' programme, although some would continue to offer early childhood services including education and nursery places.

The integration of getset and Health Visitor/School Nursing service is planned, in addition to support for focusing spend on services rather than buildings.

Almost 300 regular support services are provided at 150 locations across the county, mainly in community venues. The intention is for this to continue based on local need.

Health Visitor services, would continue in community venues and in homes. Nurseries currently operating from children's centre buildings will continue; in some areas expanded and enhanced. There is acknowledgement that more work is needed in some locations (e.g. Chard).

The recommendations went to the Scrutiny Committee, Children and Families this week, with a final decision being taken on 12th Feb. When the current contract with Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust comes to an end in Mar. 2019, Public Health Nursing services will be delivered directly by SCC as part of the Family Support Service.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL VACANCIES

A number of local parishes currently have vacancies that they are active looking to fill. With the increasing devolution of responsibility for local services to town and parish councils it is important that our rural communities are represented. If you care.... get involved in the decision making.

100 YEARS OF THE VOTE FOR WOMEN – A Champagne Tea is planned to mark this event on 8th Feb. at The Shrubbery. £15 p.p. 3pm-5pm. To book your place contact me – details below.

ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

6/1	Ilminster Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch
8/1	Dowlish Wake PC
8/1	Donyatt PC
9/1	Ilminster/Crewkerne Schools Meeting – Wadham
11/1	Horton Recreation Ground meeting
11/1	Neroche School Appeal Hearing
12/1	SCC – Joint Scrutiny Meeting
12/1	Winsham Panto
13/1	Winsham PC Surgery
14/1	Donyatt VH B'fast
15/1	Horton PC
15/1	Ashill PC
16/1	PACT – Ilminster
16/1	Ilminster Town Council
17/1	DSFRS – Audit Committee Meeting
17/1	SSDC – Area West
18/1	SCC – Health & Wellbeing Board
18/1	SCC – County Farms
18/1	SCC – Julie Skorupka – Children's Services
18/1	SSDC – full council
18/1	SSDC – Transformation update
23/1	Childhood Trauma Training
23/1	Highways England A358 upgrade consultation
23/1	Ilminster Lit. Fest. Trustees meeting
25/1	IMEx meeting
25/1	Ilminster resident social services meeting
26/1	Highways meeting – Dowlish Wake
26/1	Dowlish Wake – Jack & the Beanstalk
28/1	Charity Quiz – Ilminster Bowling Club
29/1	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service forum meeting - Exeter
29/1	Horton Recreation Ground meeting
30/1	SCC Governance Manager re: social services
30/1	SCC – Policies & Place Scrutiny
30/1	Broadway PC meeting
30/1	Donyatt PC meeting

Please note that I will be away from 1st – 10th March.