

## Minehead Area Panel

### Notes of meeting held on 14 September 2011 at Minehead Middle School, Ponsford Road, Minehead

#### Present:

Cllr Sandra Slade (Chair)	Member of the Public
Adrian Dyer	West Somerset Council
Cllr David Sanders	West Somerset Council
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Cllr Ian Melhuish	West Somerset Council
Cllr Maureen Smith	West Somerset Council
Cllr Marcus Kravis	Minehead Town Council (part of meeting)
Cllr Stan Taylor	Minehead Town Council
Cllr Brenda Maitland-Walker	Somerset County Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset County Council
Tony Murray	Magna West Somerset
Bryan Stevens	Avon & Somerset Police
Martin Carnell	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Matt Evans	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Steve Grainger	Butlins
Richard Swift	Butlins
Graham Sizer	Minehead Chamber of Trade
Penelope Dobbin	Church of England
Clara Lawrie	About My Area website
Jean Davies	Member of the Public
Philippa Gerry	Member of the Public
Sue Lloyd	Member of the Public
Meigan Lyon	Member of the Public
Margaret Mundy	Member of the Public
Ken Sims	Member of the Public
Pete Slade	Member of the Public
Valerie Vicary	Member of the Public
John Vicary	Member of the Public
Sarah Wilsher	West Somerset Council

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

Sandra Slade welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Jenny Lennon-Wood (Minehead Development Trust), PS Tom Mayberry (Avon & Somerset Police), Richard Newby (Somerset County Council Highways), Peter Owen (Somerset County Council Highways), David Peake (Somerset County Council Highways), Inspector Lisa Simpson (Avon & Somerset Police), Cllr Molly Studley (Minehead Town Council), Loretta Whetlor.

#### **2. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns**

Maureen Smith advised the meeting that an Energy Fair organised by Forum 21 would be held on 16 and 17 September at Minehead Eye. Leaflets were available.

### **3. Presentation on the Alzheimer's Society and Local Services by Steve Haigh, Countywide Dementia Awareness Worker**

Steve Haigh explained the symptoms of dementia and how the Society were concerned about the high numbers of people not going to their doctors to be diagnosed. In Somerset about 8,000 were diagnosed with dementia and on top of this there were about 2,000 with dementia who were not diagnosed. The lowest take-up of people not going to their doctors for diagnosis lived in Minehead. It was also noted that other illnesses/conditions such as depression and the menopause have similar symptoms to dementia meaning that there was all the more reason to visit the GP. One in three hospital patients had dementia. Steve also clarified the link between Alzheimer's and dementia in that Alzheimer's was a serious disease of the brain which caused dementia.

The Society ran two important and free events for dementia sufferers and their carers: The Memory Café and Singing for the Brain. Minehead was the only town in Somerset where both these events were run – on alternate Thursdays at Alcombe Methodist Church in Lower Meadow Road, Alcombe. Steve played a video showing a Singing for the Brain session, which was run in seven towns in West Somerset. The Society would like to run this event in more towns but needed more volunteers to enable this to happen.

A Somerset Dementia Advisor visited dementia sufferers in Minehead and supported and befriended them. The NHS and Somerset County Council funded this service.

The Alzheimers Society also promoted the following:

- Awareness of the legal position of driving with dementia.
- 'Remember the Person' - urging people to talk to the person the dementia sufferer used to be, which released emotions and encouraged chat.
- 'This is Me' - a document which provided the person's likes/dislikes, interests, etc. which proved to be useful for hospital stays, residential care, etc.

Finally, Steve urged the need for better support services for those with Alzheimer's.

Sandra thanked Steve for an interesting presentation.

### **4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 June 2011**

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### **Matters Arising**

*Item 3 – The bus stop opposite the catholic church in Townsend Road:* Sandra advised that the road markings were now in place and following a request made by a member of the public the space marked out for buses had been enlarged.

*Item 5 – White give way lines at the junction of Poundfield Road and West Street:* Andrew Hadley informed that the lines were now in place.

*Item 8 – Minehead Festival on 10 August:* Sandra gave thanks to Butlins, Minehead Town and West Somerset Councils for a very successful event.

*Item 10 – Minehead Town Council Update:* Sandra reported that Minehead Town Council had been asked if they wanted to send a representative to the Panel meetings to provide a Minehead Town Council update. The Town Council would discuss this at their next full Council meeting.

*Item 10 – Out of hours emergency cover by medical professionals in West Somerset:* Sandra reported that a letter had been sent to Jan Hull of Somerset PCT regarding the lack of emergency cover in West Somerset and that a reply had been received explaining that the GP Out of Hours Service and the Ambulance Emergency Service was delivered by the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and the services at Minehead Community Hospital and the Minor Injuries Unit were provided by Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. NHS Somerset worked closely with both Trusts and so to address the Panel's concerns Jan Hull suggested that the Panel should meet with the two Trusts to discuss local urgent and emergency care provision. Sandra asked for representatives to attend the meeting with her. It was agreed that Brenda Maitland-Walker, Christine Lawrence and Ian Melhuish would accompany Sandra. Meigan Lyon suggested that Dr Edward Ford from Irnham Lodge Surgery should also be invited.

Brenda advised that this issue had also been called in by Somerset County Council's Scrutiny Committee and would be going to a Scrutiny Committee meeting in October.

*Item 10 - Business waste collection and disposal:* Adrian apologised for not contacting Somerset Waste Partnership to ascertain whether there were any plans to help businesses co-ordinate their waste collection and disposal. He would do this for the next meeting. Graham Sizer advised that businesses in the past had looked into setting up a waste and recycling site for commercial operators in Minehead, but there was so much red tape involved and licences to be obtained that the project had come to a standstill.

Adrian advised that a gasification plant was being discussed for West Somerset in the future, ie, a hi-tech incinerator, which turned non-recyclable rubbish into inert material used for concrete bricks and laying roads. However, again much red tape was involved before the step could be taken to engage with a company to build a gasification plant.

## **5. Civil Parking Enforcement and On Street Parking**

An information sheet on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) had been circulated with the agenda. Adrian explained that CPE was a Somerset County Council (SCC) driven partnership project, which SCC wished to run from April 2012. West Somerset Council had approved CPE in principle from a traffic management perspective but was waiting for the results of a financial appraisal before making a decision as to whether or not to proceed down this route. It was also unknown how much the County Council would be charging for the service, as other district councils had also not come to any firm decision.

Graham Sizer and Marcus Kravis expressed concern with the current situation of non-enforcement. Buchanan's had undertaken a survey in 2006 which showed there were 100 cars parked illegally at any one time in Minehead and since then the situation had not improved.

Christine Lawrence suggested that the Panel write to Councillor ? on behalf of the town of Minehead.

Stan Taylor reminded the meeting that, at present it was still the role of the police to enforce legal parking.

## 6. **Magna West Somerset Update by Tony Murray, Director of MWS**

Tony Murray spoke to his tabled report, which had also been circulated prior to the meeting. The main points of his report and talk were:

- MWS owned and managed 2300 homes, 88% of which were in West Somerset.
- Of these 1901 homes, 585 (30.8%) were in Alcombe and Minehead.
- MWS' purpose was to "help people meet their housing and related needs and aspirations".
- MWS' main source of income was from tenant rents and service charges.
- Government grants were only available to fund new houses. On average this used to fund up to 50% of the cost of building, with the remainder coming from private finance. From 2011 the level of grant would only cover 20% of the cost of building a new home.
- MWS decorated the exterior of their properties on a five year cycle and undertook an annual planned maintenance programme.
- MWS let on average about 160 properties per year. In 2010/11 37 of these were in Minehead and Alcombe.
- MWS had acquired or built over 350 affordable homes for rent or low cost sale since 1988.
- As at July 2011 there were 423 housing applicants with some form of local connection with Minehead, with needs ranging from 1 bed to 5 bed homes. However, only 41 affordable homes were relet between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011.
- Demand for homes outstripped supply and it was difficult to find sites for housing in Minehead and Alcombe.
- MWS were hoping to develop 33 affordable homes for rent at the Silvermead site in Alcombe subject to planning permission being granted. This would provide a range of 2, 3 and 4 bed homes and seven 2 bed bungalows for the elderly.
- Magna did not build their own houses. In Dorset this was tried but they were badly affected by the recession. Charter (SW) Ltd (housing development arm of Magna) had been set up to work with other agencies, etc. to enable the houses to be built.
- MWS organised a meals on wheels service within a 10 mile radius of Watchet, which was run by volunteers.
- Extra Care Housing Scheme provided those in sheltered housing with extra help, eg, assisted bathrooms, lift, intensive support and support from other agencies (Social Services, voluntary organisations, etc.), own flat, kitchen and front door. This prevented people from having to go into residential care.
- MWS were currently trying to tempt elderly people to move into bungalows to allow families to move into the houses which the elderly were under-occupying. An incentive scheme running in October included help with removal/connection costs, support staff, etc.
- MWS carried out neighbourhood walkabouts covering all areas in West Somerset attended by housing officers, surveyors, local police, community support officers and tenant representatives, the aim being to proactively deal with local issues of concern such as outstanding repairs, neighbour or estate management issues. Councillors were welcome to attend these walkabouts – contact Lee Ellis, Senior Housing Officer, on 01984 635120 or by email: [lee.ellis@magna.org.uk](mailto:lee.ellis@magna.org.uk)

## 7. Strategic Vision for Minehead – an Update

Sandra read out an update on the Old Hospital, which Jenny Lennon-Wood had provided: Minehead Development Trust (MDT) continued to be engaged in a positive dialogue with NHS Somerset, the aim being to secure the Old Hospital site for the community. The PCT had always adopted a favourable attitude towards community use for the site and its three listed buildings. They had assured MDT that the site had not been placed on the open market.

Brenda Maitland-Walker as the new Chair of the Visioning Group advised that the next meeting of the Group would be held in October.

## 8. Burning Issues

Martin Carnell, Group Manager for the Taunton Group, gave a presentation on a future development which would be taking place in Minehead, called Participatory Budgeting. Basically, the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service would be making available part of their budget to community groups for projects which directly/indirectly would prevent boredom and anti-social behaviour and hence fires being started deliberately. A pilot scheme had been run in Dulverton, which was now being extended to four towns in the Service's area including Minehead, with the total sum available for each town being £5,000. Local groups would bid for money for their community projects with everyone voting for the winner(s). Alternatively, groups would be bidding to run costed options, again with everyone voting. If successful Participatory Budgeting schemes would be run on annual basis.

Adrian asked whether the Fire Service would be talking to West Somerset Council and the Police. Martin replied that communications had been taking place with Peter Hughes, the Council's community safety officer, and the Police and approaches were also being made to private companies.

Maureen Smith felt that it would be difficult to find community groups in Minehead who would want to get involved and thought that such a scheme may cause confusion as which service/group was doing what. Meigan Lyon, on the other hand, felt that such an initiative should be welcomed.

Stan Taylor praised Minehead Eye for successfully providing skating facilities, etc. for young people and felt that teenagers needed a place they could call their own. Bryan Stevens advised that the Road Safety Partnership between the Police and the Fire & Rescue Service would be holding an event at Minehead Eye to educate youngsters on safe driving and also a mature driving roadshow where assessments and advice would be given to older drivers.

Martin would forward his presentation and contact details to Sarah for circulation to the Panel.

**ACTION: Martin Carnell to forward his presentation and contact details to Sarah for circulation to the Panel.**

Adrian stated that all strategic delivery partners needed to be brought into the loop and a meeting of partners would be organised in the future, including Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

## 9. Police Report

Bryan Stevens reported that from April to September 2011 there had been 900 crimes in West Somerset, which was an increase of 130 for the same period in 2010, and detection rate was 34.4% which was an increase of 2.4% for the same period last year. The aim was to improve the detection rate to 40%.

Criminal damage to vehicles had been on the rise, although some offenders in Friday Street had recently been arrested. Ongoing issues included metal thefts from rural buildings and the night time economy.

The Summer Festival and Raft Race were both outstanding events for the community. More police officers had been drafted in from outside the area and the police were happy with how both events went.

Philippa Gerry asked whether the street pastors had made a difference to the police. Bryan replied that he only worked with them up until midnight (street pastors finished at 2am and the busiest time for the police was between 1.30am and 3.30am), but in his opinion the pastors were helpful and provided a positive influence.

Richard Swift asked whether there had been any increase in crime during the Summer Festival when an additional 25,000 people were in Minehead. Bryan Stevens said he would find out and report back.

**ACTION: Bryan Stevens to find out if there was any additional crime in Minehead on the day of the Summer Festival, Wednesday 10 August 2011.**

Bryan confirmed that the internet and phone lines had been down in Minehead a few weeks ago due to the theft of one mile of metal cable in Bishops Lydeard. As it was not his area he was not aware if anyone had been caught. Similar thefts had taken place around railway lines. The police were carrying out a programme of random checks on scrap metal dealers.

## 10. District Council Update

Adrian reported the following:

- For all four Area Panels within the district there would no longer be any note taking at the meetings. Council staff would issue the agendas, etc and a lead officer present would take notes of any actions. Volunteers were therefore welcomed to take the notes and Sarah had volunteered to take the minutes in her own time.
- Olympic Torch – local people could be nominated to take part in the relay. Adrian had signed the Official Secrets Act so could not divulge whether the torch would be going through Minehead, however, any successfully nominated person would carry the torch in Somerset and as near as possible to their home address. A decision on who would carry the torch to be made in November 2011.
- The Council was marketing land off Seaward Way to be sold for affordable housing.
- Land at Bircham Road and Silvermead were currently the sites of two planning applications for housing, to be determined by Planning Committee at the end of September 2011.
- The coach parking facility behind the West Somerset Railway was still under construction but nearing completion. Adrian had requested authorisation for the release of funds for landscaping. When completed tourism coaches could park on the land, freeing up the Aquasplash site for marketing.

- The Council had a staffing input into the Summer Festival and on behalf of West Somerset Council Adrian thanked Butlins, the main sponsor. He would be talking to Julian Highfield regarding events next year. It was noted that Veolia had worked really hard and there was no sign of waste the next day. Richard Swift added that Butlins worked closely with all organisations involved up to and including events and the de-brief. Without the support of the whole community these events would not take place.
- The planning application for preliminary site works at Hinkley Point had been approved and a Section 106 Agreement was to be agreed shortly for £30 million across West Somerset and Sedgemoor to mitigate site works, including £1.6 million to West Somerset Community College to expand facilities and broaden training in relation to engineering and energy. EDF would be ensuring that contractors engaged fully with local businesses and local communities regarding work on the site. EDF would be submitting the main application for the nuclear power station at the end of September/beginning of October to the Infrastructure Planning Commission.
- West Somerset Council (WSC) were talking to Minehead Town Council (MTC) about MTC taking on services that WSC can no longer do. Minehead Town Council's Working Group would be reporting back to a full Council meeting of Minehead Town Council then talks would continue.
- WSC had facilitated the securing of funding by EDF for the West Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau - £40,000 pa for the next two years for an additional debt counsellor.

John Vicary asked what was happening about the Visitor Information and Interpretation Centre. Adrian replied that the staff would be made redundant at the end of October and the Centre may close temporarily at this point. WSC were talking to a local consortium interested in running the facility and he was confident that the Centre would be back in operation by Spring/Summer 2012, if not by Winter 2011.

## **11. Highway Matters**

Brenda Maitland-Walker reported the following on behalf of the Highways Department:

- The works to the new coach park including the surfacing would be completed by Friday 7 October.
- The tidying up works to the new hospital entrance would be completed by early October.
- Towards the middle/end of October a number of areas of concrete slabs would be repaired in Minehead including Blenheim Road, The Parade and Park Street.
- Resurfacing of a section of Blenheim Road would take place between 11 and 17 October (this date may change slightly depending on works prior to this but signs would be erected on site).
- Resurfacing of Townsend Road would take place between 17 and 29 October (again this date may change slightly depending on works prior to this but signs would be erected on site).
- Remedial works to a number of resurfacing schemes undertaken last year (Paganel Rise, Richmond Close, The Dell, Garden Way, Millbridge Gardens, West Park Close) would be undertaken in October/November.
- Resurfacing of Dugdale and West Streets to be put back until Spring 2012.
- Provisional night road closures from 7pm to 7am would take place on A39 from Kilve to Holford between 26 September and 3 October; on A358 at Flaxpool Hill from 3 to 7 October and on A358 at Sampford Brett on 10 and 11 October.

## 12. Any Other Business

### **North Road Car Park**

Margaret Mundy asked why the North Road car park was in darkness. Sarah to find out.

**ACTION: Sarah to find out why the lights in the North Road car park were not working.**

*A fault in the cable was causing the car park to be in darkness. Lynch's would be digging up the old cable and laying a new cable and then fitting the lights. Work to hopefully start in the week commencing 19 September 2011.*

### **Warren Road Car Park**

Andrew Hadley had received comments that the barrier across the Warren Road car park closed too early thus preventing the car park being used by people in the evening when they want to go down to the seafront. Could the car park be open between dawn and dusk? Adrian explained that this was a community safety issue and the barrier had been funded by the Police; community safety therefore dictated when the barrier came into operation.

### **Dropped Kerbs v Non-Dropped Kerbs**

Andrew expressed concern that kerbs were being dropped when kerbs were essential for blind people to let them know where the pavement ended and the road began. Brenda advised that dropped kerbs caused problems for scooters, pushchairs, etc. The Panel agreed that, unfortunately, this was a case of not being able to please everyone.

## 13. Date & Venue of Future Meetings

**Future meeting to be held on:**

Wednesday 14 December 2011

Wednesday 14 March 2011