

## ILMINSTER DIVISION COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT JANUARY 2020

### **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

SSDC held a briefing for all members and staff at the beginning of the month to outline possible options. All participating authorities agree that change is necessary and recognise that in delivering services to residents there is inter-dependence between them.

In specific relation to Somerset five key challenges have been identified –

- Disadvantaged children (25% fall into this category)
- Young people aged 16-24 (lack of high higher education provision)
- Economy
- Environment
- Older people

Somerset has lower social mobility rates than elsewhere in the country.

Seven options have been considered. The preferred option for the district councils focusses on working more closely together to align service provision and benefit from collective procurement of goods and services.

### **SCC – IMPROVING LIVES FUND**

I have now received confirmation that all four bids of £500 each have been approved.

- Ilminster Town Team – to supply equipment to set up the venture
- Horton Playing Field Project – for play equipment
- Ashill PC – for tree planting
- Green Ilminster – for tree planting

### **SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY**

An update on the work carried out by this group was received at this month's SSDC full council meeting. The 20-year Flood Action Plan includes schemes for dredging, resilience infrastructure and flood management schemes, in addition to land management and training.

SRA have been pro-active in responding to local concerns within the division.

### **AVON & SOMERSET POLICE – Independent Advisory Group**

An informal list of safe places is to be produced for the LGBTQ community.

Hate Crime often leads to terrorism, and details of the government's Prevent Strategy were outlined. The Prevent Duty is a legal requirement to safeguard which includes the local authorities/schools/ colleges/ prisons etc. Anyone can refer someone by contacting the police via 101.

Reports can also be taken anonymously if necessary.

There are 4 P's under the strategy:

- Prevent (safeguard)
- Pursue (investigate)
- Protect (strengthen)
- Prepare (minimise)

The intention is to work with people at the early stages, to prevent indoctrination, planning, and terrorist training etc.

**Operation Remedy** – an update was received from Sgt. Rob Jameson. It is expected that any additional government funding will help to expand this area of operations.

**Smart Water** – local residents and businesses are encouraged to mark all valuables to enable easier identification where items may be stolen.

**Anti-Social Behaviour** is of particular concern in the area at present.

### **DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

At this month's meeting the proposed Safer Together Programme was discussed, with significant members of the public in attendance. A final decision on the service's future is yet to be decided.

## HIGHWAYS

In response to a number of concerns in relation to Highways I can confirm that the Leader of SCC has authorised funding to recruit additional officers.

In recent weeks, response of local highways officers to local concerns has improved considerably.

## PARKING/TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Discussions are ongoing to resolve what is an increasing problem, particularly in Broadway.

## AREA WEST

This month a presentation was given, highlighting the issue of deprivation in the district by comparison with other areas of the country. Over 25% of children living Somerset are in receipt of free school meals, a key indicator of poverty. The cost of supporting those families living in poverty, often with associated problems, such as mental health issues, is £27k per family per year. Within the 16-24 age group there is twice the rate of self-harm compared to the national average. Social mobility is poor, and the lack of opportunities for further education is a challenge, causing those wanting to gain additional skills to leave the county, often not returning to take up employment in the area, resulting in a skills shortage. The average wage across the district is £3k less than other areas of the country. In addition to this, our population is ageing and, although living longer, people are suffering from more complex illnesses, and are increasingly isolated by the lack of internet connectivity.

## BLACKDOWN HILLS AND COUNTRYSIDE UPDATE

Lottery funding has been granted, with a number of projects being planned across the area. Those interested in becoming involved, particularly school and community groups, should contact

[adrian.moore@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.moore@southsomerset.gov.uk)

## ALLOWENSHAY WATER SUPPLY

I met with officers this month and can confirm that residents have now withdrawn their appeal against the notice issued by SSDC. However, the problem with the current water supply remains, and SSDC have indicated that they will aim to support those affected where possible.

## SSDC ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

At this month's full council meeting an update was received in relation to developing and adopting a Green Agenda to promote sustainable environment, economy and communities.

SSDC's carbon footprint is 1,634 tonnes CO<sup>2</sup>e and Carbon Intensity is 4.68 tonnes CO<sup>2</sup>e (per full time employee).

Three new members have been recruited to the environment team to support this work, including visits to schools.

1,000 trees have been planted and SSDC land is being assessed for enhanced tree planting.

The team can be contacted via [ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk)

**Climate Emergency Strategy Event:** Public events to discuss the creation of Somerset's first Climate Emergency Strategy will be run by the Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN) on behalf of the four District Councils and SCC. The strategy will identify ways for Somerset to work towards being carbon neutral by 2030 and adapt to predicted climate change impacts.

- South Somerset event is 10am – 4pm - 22 Feb. Vicarage St. Methodist Church, Yeovil, BA20 1JB.

Open to residents, businesses, groups and anyone with an interest, the drop-ins will be a chance to discuss the initial thoughts of the five councils set out in a 'framework' document.

## **SSDC PLANNING**

Concerns in relation to response times from officers remain.

## **WINSHAM SIS SCHEME**

SCC have confirmed that they have officially commissioned the SCC Traffic Management team to deliver this scheme. Options have been considered and Highways Officer Gary Warren is to arrange a site visit in the near future.

## **A358 UPGRADE**

Local discussion in relation to the preferred route are ongoing, with a number of parishes engaging regularly. At the request of local residents, I have been trying to secure a further meeting with HE and have also contacted out MP. In response, David Stock of HE has informed Marcus that there are no new proposals since the announcement of the preferred route. HE are waiting to hear about funding and also from the Ministers involved. They say that they have received a lot of good feedback from residents around the Ashill area will be looking at further options as the preferred route is being developed. HE are currently declining the invitation to a meeting with residents as there is nothing further to report at the moment. There will be community forums and formal consultations once further information is available.

## **NIPPY BUS**

I have a meeting planned this coming week to try to pursue this matter.

## **GYPSY/TRAVELLERS**

The last full caravan count was carried out in July 2018. The last two (six monthly) submissions were estimates based on previous counts. The next count is due this month, when a full count will take place, and checks made with the planning team that there are no new sites or extensions. There are plans for a transit site to be set up in the area in the near future.

## **RIGHTS OF WAY**

Several applications for bridleways within the division are currently under investigation.

## **FLOODING**

I have been informed of the dangers related to local residents attempting the clear ditches etc. and am advised that this is not to be encouraged due to health and safety concerns.

## **GEMINI CARNIVAL CLUB**

Their next fund-raising breakfast will be at Donyatt VH on Sun. 9<sup>TH</sup> Feb. 2020.

## **FRIENDS OF ILMINSTER LIBRARY**

FoIL are still looking for secretarial support. Anyone interested should contact the Chairman, David Glossop at [foil1.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:foil1.chairman@gmail.com)

## **FAIRTRADE**

Fairtrade fortnight this year will be held from 24<sup>th</sup> February to 8<sup>th</sup> March, with a focus on cocoa production.

## ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

6/1	SSDC meeting - Allowenshay water supply
7/1	SSDC – briefing on the future of local government
7/1	Broadway PC
8/1	Chard Museum
8/1	Winsham PC
9/1	Fairtrade meeting
10/1	DSFRS board meeting
11/1	Friends of Ilminster Library fund raising event
12/1	Donyatt VH b'fast
12/1	Gypsy/Traveller resident support
13/1	Donyatt resident bridleway meeting
13/1	Neroche School governor monitoring visit
16/1	SSDC – Treasury Management briefing
16/1	SSDC – full council
18/1 – 19/1	LGA training – Warwick University
20/1	Highways re: Kingstone speeding
20/1	Ashill PC
20/1	Horton PC
22/1	Area West
24/1	SSDC re: gypsy traveller housing
27/1	Donyatt PC
29/1	Rotary Youth Speaks competition