

ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSSC/SCC COUNCILLOR REPORT FEBRUARY 2015

COUNTY COUNCIL – The new post holder for Director of Childrens' Services, Julian Wooster, has yet to take up his post. I have had several meetings with officers in relation to Adult Social Care in South Somerset and several changes to staffing arrangements are under way to improve the service.

As a result of the high levels of sickness amongst SCC staff, I have secured an invitation to attend one of the hearings this coming month.

I had two meetings with OFSTED inspectors during their inspection of childrens' safeguarding this month. Results are due at the end of March.

The announcement of the new central 0300 contact number is due this month.

Proposed cuts to funding in relation to support services for the homeless were averted with the last minute announcement of additional central government funding.

For the 2015/16 budget no council tax increase is proposed although there have been unavoidable cuts to some services which has given cause for disquiet in some areas.

One local resident has raised the issue of youth provision, pre-empting my planned meeting early in March to discuss this.

May 11th has been agreed at SCC for the launch of an annual 'Somerset Day'.

During budget discussions all are agreed that Somerset is still under funded when compared with other local authorities. I am planning to lead a delegation to Westminster on May 11th to highlight our need for fairer funding and I am hoping for participation from all interested organisations as well as individuals.

SCC SCRUTINY – at this month's Policy & People scrutiny meeting the focus has been on the Care Commissioning Group's two year plan, in addition to concerns over ophthalmic services at Musgrove Hospital required MRSA was reported at Yeovil in January, the first case for 2 years. The difficulty in recruiting specialists (a problem nationally) has meant the Referral to Treatment Time targets continue to be missed.

HIGHWAYS – Pothole repairs have increased significantly but this has not prevented local news reports of a failure to address this issue in Ilminster, which are incorrect. There have been only three reports of pot holes in Ilminster since January, two of which have been repaired, with the third due for repair by the 10th March.

Concerns have been raised by a Winsham resident over the quality of repairs carried out, which I am following up.

In the wake of the long term closure of The Beacon last year, local businesses have been concerned about the impact of the closure of the road at Ilton Bridges for work carried out by Wessex Water, planned for some time. I have arranged for 'business open signs' to be put up to offset this while the work is carried out.

Drains – Work to resolve issues concerning blocked drains has largely been completed.

Winterhay Lane – Local residents continue to be very unhappy at SCC's failure to pursue resolution over the right of way status.

Gypsy/Travellers – The enforcement notice issued to for the illegal occupation of the Cad Lane site has prompted an appeal application. The occupation of the site at Peasmarsh and reports of anti-social behaviour have resulted in several site visits; alternative accommodation has now been found by SSSC.

EDUCATION – Neroche school is undergoing consultation and a site feasibility study for an extension to its catchment area as its numbers continue to increase.

SOMERSET GOVERNORS' STRATEGY GROUP – The new Exec. Officer has now taken up her position, and the new strategy proposals are due to be considered at the next meeting. Support services for education are to be retained in-house for the time being.

SSDC – Area West – Universal Credit for single job seekers without dependents will commence in April. There has been an increase in housing benefits claimants in employment, and at 25% is higher than the national average.

Full council – the budget for 2015/2016 was agreed at this meeting, and a reduction in council tax from £150.74 to £147.75 (Band D properties) was agreed, which I voted against.

PLANNING – concern has been raised over retrospective planning applications, especially for listed buildings.

HEALTH – Red Cross first aid sessions for next month have now been arranged. Other groups interested in taking advantage of these should contact Diane Bale for place/venue details on d.bale1965@gmail.com.

I attended a briefing on the 2014 Care Act, which comes into force in April and can confirm that SCC are on course for compliance. Two key factors are that assessments are to be offered to all, along with the introduction of the £72,000 cap on personal contributions towards care costs.

ROYAL DEVON & EXETER NHS FT – The contract for an on site Boots pharmacy has been agreed. Plans are in place to improve the coordination of appointment for patients with multiple conditions to avoid repeat visits to the hospital. The trust has been confirmed as the safest in the south west. Current focus for increasing membership is with younger age groups and schools. There is recognition that across the NHS a radical re-design of services with increased focus on prevention and early intervention and improved partnerships with GPs and community services is required.

CORPORATE PARENT BOARD – This month I met with the head of the Care Commissioning Group to look at ways in which we can work more effectively to fill the gap between social services and mental health support.

A foster care campaign has been launched which has resulted in a large increase in enquiries.

ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSDC/SCC COUNCILLOR MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES – FEB. 2015

2nd	RD&E Council of Governors co-ordinating group
4th	RD&E Patient Safety & Quality group
	OFSTED – SCC Safeguarding
	Winsham PC
5th	Fiveways Special School – staffing committee
	Warehouse Theatre – performance of Hayfever
9th	RD&E Member & Patient Engagement Group
	Somerset Governor's Strategy Group
	OFSTED – SCC supporting Somerset in Care Council
	Neroche School governors
	Broadway VH committee
10th	Ilminster Twinning Association AGM
12th	Duke of Edinburgh Awards – Octagon
16th	RD&E Council of Governors development day
	Chaffcombe PC
17th	Ilminster Town Council
	SCC - Corporate Parent Board
	Donyatt – meeting at constituent's request
18 th	SCC – full council – budget meeting
	SSDC – Area West
20th	RD&E Patient Engagement & Experience committee
20th	Rotary Youth Leadership Awards - Dartmoor
21st	Horton – fête meeting
24 th	Willow Schools Trust
25th	Ilminster – meeting with Enham Trust
26th	SSDC – full council
27th	SCC – Policies & People Scrutiny
	SCC – meeting with Chair of Care Commissioning Group
	SCC – Care Act briefing