

ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSDC/SCC COUNCILLOR REPORT MARCH 2015

COUNTY COUNCIL – The cabinet member for resources, David Huxtable, has stood down from this position as a result of being found to have breached the authority's code of conduct during the sale of West Somerset Railways.

My planned attendance at one of the SCC hearings in relation to absence due to staff sickness was cancelled.

The new post holder for Director of Childrens' Services, Julian Wooster, has now taken up his post. The OFSTED report concerning its inspection of Children's Services earlier this year has now been released. The grading remains 'inadequate' for a number of reasons. Although some good practice was acknowledged, a lack of consistency was observed, and this along with more stable management and closer working with partner organisations remain key areas requiring attention. I am due to meet with the leader later this week to discuss plans for addressing this.

The new central 0300 number of contacting SCC is now up and running - 0300 123 2224

An online petition has been set up to push for fairer funding for Somerset, and local residents are urged to participate – the link is www.somerset.gov.uk/fairerfunding

Discussions are underway for Taunton Deane DC and Taunton Police station to move into the main SCC building.

ELECTION – There is concern that with so many parish councillors standing down that it will be difficult for several parishes to form a council. Local residents are urged to put themselves forward.

SCC SCRUTINY – at this month's Policy & People scrutiny meeting the focus has been on the impact of the current commissioning policy and the outsourcing of some services. The Corporate Monitoring report, showed that out of 23 indicators, 9 are on target, 13 at risk, and that 'children can feel safe and protected' is currently the indicator of the highest concern, with a red risk rating.

SSDC – Area West – I did not attend this last month's meeting due to work commitments.

SSDC - Full council – At the meeting 5th March the Local Plan was approved.

HIGHWAYS – Speeding remains of concern in both Broadway and Horton, in addition to congestion at Neroche School at pick up and drop off times.

Planned structural schemes for Ilminster division in 2015/16 are -

Carriageway Surface Dressing - Donyatt – Donyatt/Chard Road; Ashill – Ashill by-pass

Non-Principal Carriageway Schemes - Ilminster – Ile Court

Drainage Schemes - Ilminster – Station Road

POTHOLE UPDATE for the division (01/04/2014 – 26/03/2015);

No. of Potholes Reported by Public: 17

No. of Pothole Defects: 68

No. of Pothole Defect Repairs: 72

Drains – Ilminster town council have raised concerns over ongoing issues with blocked drains. As has been reported in the local press, in order for me to take action the onus is on those with information to keep me informed please.

Winterhay Lane – There has as yet been no resolution.

Rights of Way - Broadway – several residents have raised concern over the poor condition of the access of the footpath through Brookside in the direction of the school and pub.

Gypsy/Travellers – There remains a high level of concern and frustration over illegal occupancy of two sites in the division, one at Cad Lane, which is now under appeal, and also at Peasmarsh. Of particular concern is the inability of SCC to act promptly to re-gain possession of the site at Peasmarsh – I have met with the officer handling this and will give a verbal update at the next meeting of Donyatt PC.

PLANNING – There are a number of plans for housing developments that have been submitted locally, raising concerns over the impact of an increase in traffic movements and other issues.

SOMERSET SCHOOLS FORUM – this is the body which makes strategic decisions regarding the allocation of funding for all local authority schools in Somerset. Encouraging representatives from governing bodies to come forward for membership remains challenging, at a time when difficult decisions continue to be made over inadequate funding levels.

87% of all children in South Somerset who are receipt of free school meals have social, emotional or mental health issues. More attention is to be paid to preventative interventions to resolve this.

SOMERSET GOVERNORS' STRATEGY GROUP – New strategy proposals are now under consideration.

HEALTH – Red Cross first aid sessions continue to take place. Groups interested in taking advantage of these should contact Diane Bale for place/venue details on d.bale1965@gmail.com.

ROYAL DEVON & EXETER NHS FT – local governors representing Somerset met this month to consider ways in which patient engagement could be improved by closer contact with local organisations. Speakers are available for interested groups. Plans for moving ahead with electronic patient records have now been agreed, where the trust is leading the way nationally. Focus in the coming year is to be on 'business as usual' in a challenging environment, where capacity is at its limit, and to increase integration of the hospital at home model of care.

CORPORATE PARENT BOARD – As agreed at my meeting last month, the Care Commissioning Group is now looking at specific case studies to look at ways in which partnership working, or the lack of it, impacts on placement stability for youngsters in the care of SCC.

The SCC social work academy is now operating, with new recruits receiving additional mentoring support to aid retention.

Quality Care planning training is now in place to support better long term placements for Children Looked After. My involvement in supporting the In Care Council and Leaving Care Council continues. This was one area of the OFSTED report that did receive positive comments.

I was invited to attend a Reg. 33 visitor inspection of a children's home in Yeovil.

The GetSet initiative is to be re-launched to improve multi-agency working practices.

I met with the DofE organiser at SCC and plans are now in place for me to train as a leader to support a programme specifically aimed at Children Looked After. 2016 is the 60th anniversary of DofE award programme and as part of their aims to raise £60k I have agreed to undertake a fund raising challenge.

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

3rd	RD&E member and patient engagement Broadway PC
4th	Somerset Schools Forum Winsham PC
5th	SSDC full council – local plan
6th	SCC Corporate Parent - placement stability Duke of Edinburgh – scheme for Children Looked After
8th	Donyatt VH breakfast
9th	Social service Fiveways Centre Yeovil Donyatt PC
13th	Neroche School – head teacher’s review Red Nose Day quiz
14th	Charity coffee morning - Buckland St. Mary Dowlish VH fund raising quiz
16th	SCC – Member Development panel Somerset Governors’ Strategy Group Horton PC
17th	Ilminster TC – (not attended - written report submitted)
18th	SSDC Area West – (not attended)
19th	Charity fund raising quiz - Frome
20th	RD&E – Council of Governors development day
21st	St. Peter’s Horton – lent lunch Ashill pre-school fund raising event Fund raising quiz – Hambridge
22nd	Broadway – planning meeting
26th	CLOS performance of ‘Allo ‘Allo Chard
27th	SCC – People & Place Scrutiny
28th	Reg. 33 Children’s Home inspection – Yeovil Event for SCC officer Susan Fielden – Long Load
29th	Somerset in Care and Leaving Care Council meeting - Bridgwater
30th	SCC – officer meeting re: gypsy travellers Peasmarsh