

### ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSDC/SCC COUNCILLOR REPORT JUNE 2016

Two key local events took place this month. Ilminster's first ever Literary Festival, with a wide range of events taking place over 9 days was a tremendous success, and hot on its heels IMeX, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year. All great ways to highlight all that Ilminster has to offer. Across the division local communities have a wide range of activities and events in place for the summer. Chard museum held a successful 'IN OR OUT' open evening on the night of the referendum vote, resulting in one new member and several volunteers. There will be an open afternoon on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The fire service is offering free Home Fire Safety Checks. These checks less than five minutes after which you may be offered a home fire safety visit, which takes less than 30 minutes; advice is provided along with a free smoke detector if required.

If you know of anyone who would like to take advantage of this call 0800 05 02 999.

**SSDC's Welfare Advice Team** have announced that in conjunction with Citizen's Advice South Somerset, a surgery offering benefits and welfare advice will be open every Thursday at Forefront from 9.30 to 2pm, on an appointments only basis.

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/housing/welfare-advice/>

#### **SCC 'Listening, Learning, Changing' roadshow - IMEx**

As part of a public engagement programme relating to budget allocation decisions, members of the public tried balancing the budget on a giant set of scales, and were given options to choose from, in line with cabinet posts held at SCC; help vulnerable and elderly people; attract jobs and apprentices; safer children and better care; better schools producing better results; invest in the economy and infrastructure; protecting our environment; keep council tax low; healthy residents and reduce inequalities. 216 people took part in the exercise, using coloured tokens to prioritise the top three areas they would like to see investment in. Helping vulnerable and elderly people came out top, with a total score of 262. The next most important, attracting jobs and apprentices to Somerset, gained a score of 205. Also high on the list was keeping our children safe and the provision of better care for them, which can have an impact on the level of council tax we pay. Health and reducing inequalities came bottom, with a score of just 67. Central Government funding fell by £15m last year and is due to fall by a further £42m by 2019/2020, whilst demand for services, especially Adult Social Care, is rising, driven by our ageing population. In 20 years time more than a quarter of Somerset's population will be aged over 65.

#### **County Hall Parking**

SCC has been reviewing staff car-parking to ensure consistency across all offices. The recommendation endorsed (subject to consultation) is to charge staff for parking at County Hall, the income going towards improving alternative travel to work options. An annual parking charge of £250 (pro-rata) for all permits, except for Blue Badge holders, will be introduced in Sept., payable monthly by salary deductions. A separate review will consider councillor parking.

#### **BROADBAND**

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) announced that following EU approval of the national UK scheme, the next phase of the superfast broadband programme can now proceed to procurement. Progress plans will go out to tender once suppliers provide essential information about commercial roll-out. Securing approval for the scheme was a pre-requisite to begin the tender process. State Aid rules limit publicly funded broadband to areas with no commercial case for investment. Confirmation has been received that the Referendum result will have no impact on this funding.

#### **TRANSPORT - BUSES**

Residents are invited to take part in Catch the Bus week, 4-11 July, an initiative sponsored by national bus operators aimed at promoting the greater use of existing bus services throughout Somerset to help protect existing bus services by using buses more frequently.

**AREA WEST** – Officer support is available for communities seeking to carry out parish plans.

### **CORPORATE PARENT BOARD**

At SCC full council, the Corporate Parenting Strategy (2016-19) was approved and elected members were reminded of their responsibility to champion the needs of those children who come into the care of the council. Members were also provided with guidance and links to resources clarifying their duties. Councillors must ensure children looked after are given opportunities to lead happy and fulfilling lives, and when it comes to health and education should constantly ask: "Would this be good enough for my own child?" Children looked after or who are leaving our care do not achieve as well as other children. They do not do as well at school, are less likely to go on to higher education, are more likely to be not in education, employment or training and are over-represented in the youth offending system. All councillors should be using their position and contacts to promote better opportunities for children looked after, to narrow the attainment gap. Members of the Somerset in Care Council (SiCC) and Leaving Care Council (SLCC), visited the Houses of Parliament this month to key decision makers and to take part in discussions about the Government's new Children and Social Work Bill.

This month I attended a case study meeting in relation to those 150 young people leaving care (of which 30 are young parents) who are not in education, training or employment. Some cases were extremely harrowing and increasingly drug use is playing an adverse part in their outcome.

A training day was held for local councillors, to promote a wider understanding and co-operation.

### **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY**

The local authority has been asked to house up to 70 unaccompanied refugee children, who are likely to be male, aged 15-17, giving cause for concern due to the current lack of placements.

The latest Youth Justice Report shows that in Somerset re-offending rates are 32.3%, compared with the national average of 37.8%. The subject of specific training for taxi drivers in spotting signs of child sexual exploitation is being considered.

### **FOSTERING**

Everyone is urged to help raise the profile of Fostering in Somerset, by ensuring publicity materials are in the right places, supporting events and talking positively about fostering and its importance. SCC aims to recruit 50 new fostering households this year (600 extra foster carers are needed in the SW). The greatest area of need is for Foster Carers for:

Children aged over 10; sibling groups; children with disabilities; young people leaving care.

### **CHILDCARE PROVISION**

Working parents of three and four year olds will receive 30 hours of funded childcare per week from Sept. 2017. New legislation will allow parents, who work at least 16 hours per week each, to receive an additional 570 hours of funded childcare a year on top of the existing hours available. In single parent families, that one parent has to work 16 hours per week. SCC has developed a survey for families and Early Years providers to enable everyone to have a say and to understand the preferences of parents to ensure appropriate nurseries, playgroups and childminders are provided. For more information contact [sfis@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sfis@somerset.gov.uk)

### **HIGHWAYS**

**ILMINSTER** - A local resident has contacted me over concerns in relation to parking at Townsend restricting access to enable maintenance of those properties facing the roadside.

**HORTON** - Concern has been raised over the timescale of the Five Dials SIS scheme along with fears over the increase in traffic at Neroche School.

**DILLINGTON ENTRANCE** – Considerable local concern has been expressed over the closure of the gate at the Whitelackington end of the estate. Discussion to resolve the issue is ongoing.

**ASHILL SID READINGS** – 17/516 to 1/6/16 – old A303 near Harvey Way

Average speed - 24 mph 85% - 39 mph (43 vehicles over 50mph) Total vehicles – 4768

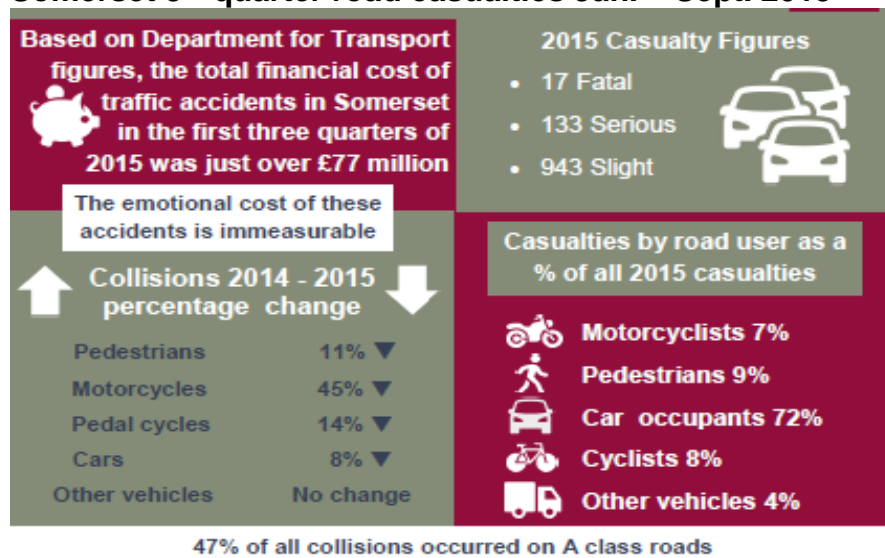
**DONYATT SID READINGS** – 17/516 to 1/6/16 – A358 Donyatt Hill

Average speed – 35 mph 85% - 40 mph (305 vehicles over 50mph) Total vehicles – 35846

## HIGHWAYS PLANNED WORK

|                 |                 |                              |              |         |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Whitelackington | Stocklinch Road | Drainage works. Temp closure | 03 to 27 Oct | 20 days |
| Ashill          | Thickthorn Lane | Drainage works. Temp closure | 12 to 23 Dec | 10 days |

## Somerset 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter road casualties Jan. – Sept. 2015



## PLANNING

Land to the rear of The Bell Inn, Broadway - At this month's Area West meeting this outline planning application for up to 25 houses was deferred to allow for a site visit and additional information, principally from highways, and also the results of the housing survey results.

## LIBRARIES

SCC is introducing changes to its library services to benefit customers and improve access for all. These changes result from the expansion of the LibrariesWest consortium and the introduction of a new, shared management computer system.

Customers will benefit from the changes by being able to:

- Use their current library card at any of the 150 LibrariesWest libraries
- Borrow, renew, return, reserve items regardless of where they were originally borrowed.
- Access a wider range of stock through the shared catalogue of around 2.5 million items.
- 24/7 access [www.librarieswest.org.uk](http://www.librarieswest.org.uk) and mobile App to search, reserve and renew items

## FOOD CHAMPIONS

Somerset's Food Champions scheme is expanding its volunteer network to help residents save money by wasting less food. On average, every week each household wastes the equivalent of six

meals, equal to £200 of food/drink per person per year (£290 for people who live alone). Food Champions do not need to be experts, just keen to waste less, recycle more, save cash – and help others do the same. Two free training sessions are planned later this year. Volunteers must undertake to champion the cause in their community by chatting with neighbours, running workshops, giving talks or having displays at events. Resources are provided to support this. For more information email [recycle@somersetwaste.gov.uk](mailto:recycle@somersetwaste.gov.uk) or contact Beth Prince on 01823 625700.

### ACTIVITIES/EVENTS ATTENDED

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1st              | Ilminster Literary Festival (18 events attended)              |
| 9th              |   |
| 2nd              | Dorset CC Scrutiny – future plans for the NHS (joint working) |
| 3rd              | Devon/Somerset Fire Rescue Service VIP day – Exeter           |
| 5th              | Donyatt – service for QEII's 90 <sup>th</sup> birthday        |
| 5th              | Bridgwater – SiCC/SICC meeting                                |
| 6th              | IMEx community lunch meeting                                  |
| 8th              | Lit. Fest. Quiz – Donyatt VH                                  |
| 11th             | SCC roadshow – IMEx   |
| 11th             | QE2 b'day brunch – Dowlish Wake                               |
| 11th             | Ashill pre-school cream tea                                   |
| 12th             | IMEx – community lunch  |
| 12th             | Donyatt QE2 cream tea   |
| 12th             | Horton open gardens   |
| 12th             | Minster- civic service  |
| 14th             | PACT meeting – Ilminster                                      |
| 14th             | SCC – Voice of the Child meeting                              |
| 14th             | Corporate Parent training meeting                             |
| 14th             | SCC – adult social services – safeguarding                    |
| 15th             | SCC – social values meeting                                   |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | SSDC Area West - Chard  |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | CCG Primary Care meeting – Monk's Yard                        |
| 16th             | Winsham VH coffee morning                                     |
| 17th             | SCC – Children & Families Scrutiny                            |
| 17th             | CAP fund raising dinner – Dartington                          |
| 18th             | Dowlish Wake Duck Race  |
| 19th             | B'way Alms Houses cream tea                                   |
| 19th             | Ashill Fun Run  |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> | Ashill Volunteers service                                     |
| 19th             | Fund raising concert – Whitelackington                        |
| 20th             | B'way planning site visit                                     |
| 20th             | Yeovil College – SCC achieving excellence for all roadshow    |
| 21st             | Ilminster town council ( <b>not attended</b> )                |
| 22nd             | SSDC – planning meeting                                       |
| 23rd             | SCC - Corporate Parent pre-agenda meeting                     |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> | SCC – Education, Training and Employment meeting              |
| 23rd             | Chard Museum – referendum reception                           |
| 24th             | Concerts in the West – Meeting House                          |
| 25th             | Winsham summer fair   |
| 25th             | Horton Summer fete  |
| 25th             | Ashill Church Tea   |
| 25th             | The Minster rooms - supper                                    |
| 27th             | SCC – Corporate Parent Training meeting                       |
| 27th             | Literary festival meeting                                     |

## Agenda No 7

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 27th | Donyatt Halt restoration meeting                              |
| 27th | Donyatt VH meeting  |
| 28th | Langport – Voice of the Child participation meeting           |
| 28th | Chard- CLOKS – A Kiss card from Walter - dress rehearsal      |
| 29th | Taunton – Corporate Parent training                           |
| 30th | SCC – Report writing meeting with head of Children’s Services |
| 30th | SCC – Procurement training                                    |
| 30th | Taunton – Children & Young People’s Plan                      |