

ILMINSTER DIVISION COUNTY/DISTRICT REPORT SEPT. 2016

Local Church News

After a 2 year hiatus the vacancy in the Benefice of eight churches in the area has been filled by the appointment of Phil Denison.

SCC

A special meeting took place with senior managers last week to discuss the scale of the in-year budget overspend. Urgent measures are being put in place with immediate effect to bring this back in line with the agreed budget. A Ten Point Plan has been implemented, including a continued spending freeze, a staffing review, a recruitment freeze and review of temporary posts. Elected members are being asked to scrutinise non-essential spending.

SCC is calling for 'collective pressure on Government' over the impact of falling funding and increasing costs. SCC has written to the Prime Minister setting out the pressures facing SCC as it looks to reduce significant projected in-year overspends. The region's MPs have also been lobbied.

SCC's first quarter financial report forecasts an in-year overspend of £24m - if current rates of spending continue. The biggest projected overspends are in Adult Social Care (£12.8m) and Children's Services (£9.5m) where use of agency staff to reduce workloads and improve performance have added significantly to spending.

Over the last five years SCC has had to make savings of around £100m. On top of the savings it has had to make SCC expects to lose a further £40m of direct government funding by 2020/2021, while costs increase. E.g. over the last three years SCC has had to spend an extra £8m supporting vulnerable adults.

Customer Contact Centre – SCC has signed an agreement with Taunton Deane Borough Council to provide a shared Customer Contract Centre, from 1 Dec., for a fixed one-year period.

Changes to reception at County Hall – From Monday 3 Oct. C-Block reception will close and B-Block reception will be relocated to create a single reception area for County Hall in A-Block. This forms part of this year's necessary budget savings and will improve customer access.

Visitors will still be able to access the building through the B-Block entrance, but will be signposted through the A-Block corridor to A-Block reception.

A-Block reception opening hours will be Mon. to Thurs. 8am to 5pm, and Fri. 8am to 4.30pm.

Apprenticeships – In response to the Government's apprenticeship levy, requiring organisations to pay the equivalent of 0.5% of their pay bill into a digital account proposals have been approved to increase the number of apprentices SCC employs. The money is drawn down for apprenticeship training. SCC needs to recruit 100 apprentices annually to recoup this money., which will mean changes to recruitment processes.

Travel Somerset – Anyone travelling around Somerset can now check for delays and traffic problems at www.travelsomerset.co.uk. The new mobile-friendly website offers live updates of unplanned travel incidents, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also has a searchable map

showing details of current and future planned roadworks and road closures. Live updates can be accessed directly from the SCC's traffic control team by following @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

Somerset: Our County - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016 - The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) summary is now available on SCC's website. The summary gives an overview of the strategic health, wellbeing and social needs of Somerset people, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people. A public summary is being produced, which will be distributed to parish councils, GP surgeries, libraries, the third sector and other groups.

www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/jsna

HINKLEY POINT C

This month SCC welcomed the government's decision to proceed with the Hinkley Point C project for a new nuclear power station. The construction project, the largest in Europe, costing £40 billion, is expected to bring significant investment, job creation and training opportunities across the county, also benefitting local businesses.

SOUTH WEST ONE CONTRACT

After consultation, as part of the South West One end of contract, a new 5-year contract for provision of WAN internet services has been agreed to improve the technical services, bandwidth and reduced costs, via a new cloud based system. Implementation will be complete by Feb. 2018.

HIGHWAYS

A new G.I.S. Mapping System, "Report it", for public footpaths and rights of way, and to report a problem on the Highways has been set up. Website: <http://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>
www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/problems-on-the-road/report-a-pothole-or-road-defect/

TRANSPORT

Local residents in rural communities continue to be frustrated by the continued decline in rural transport provision, and the lack of willingness by providers to consider options where the size of buses using narrow lanes is causing obstruction.

Rights of Way Volunteers

Andy Stevenson, the Volunteer & Trails Officer for several years, has left. His replacement, Tracy Sutton, will be joining the team on 11th October. In Andy's absence, Mike Hardwill and his team have been keeping things on track. The Adopt a Path scheme is progressing. e-mail rowvolunteers@somerset.gov.uk with queries or requests. <http://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>

LITTER

Concerns continue to be raised about the amount of litter on the approach roads to the town. Highways have assured me that regular collections are made but little else can be done other than to educate the public as to the anti-social nature of this.

EDUCATION

Somerset Governor's Group (Schools) Executive Board – This group was formally dissolved at the end of August. Despite the desire for Somerset Governors to have an independent,

representative voice, separate from the local authority, there was recognition that it was not achieving its aims.

PLANNING

Cricket Malherbie - Residents met in connection with a proposed application where there are concerns over the potential impact of noise and other disturbance on the community. Discussions to reach an amicable conclusion for all parties is ongoing.

Broadway

Neroche school are intending to increase capacity to cater for pre-school provision for children aged 3 to 4, and have applied for government funding to support this initiative.

A number of recent planning applications, and the success of appeal cases, has given cause for concern over the impact of a rapid increase in housing provision in the village, with no public transport and limited services. Yarlinton are expected to be the providers of the affordable housing units on the planned new development site in the village.

YARLINGTON

Many of the issues relating to YHG's proposals in the area seem to have arisen as a result of poor communication, which they have been made aware of and are addressing.

The potential loss of affordable/social housing in the area, and its impact on these communities, has given cause for concern, which I am pursuing on behalf of those likely to be affected.

YHG have also been made aware of concerns over disruption and security of sites whilst any planned works are being carried out.

Donyatt Hill – regular meetings with YHG, local residents and representatives of the PC are ongoing in relation to proposals for the future of the site.

Riverside, Horton – I have attended meetings with residents of the site, along with YHG representatives concerning proposals for development of the main building which previously provided a community area, in addition to 8 housing units. Whilst there are assurances that any profits from the sale of the land will go towards affordable housing it is likely that any new units will be located in local towns.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

SCC is actively working with Avon & Somerset Police and other partners to raise awareness and increase public understanding of the signs of Children Sexual Exploitation (CSE), to tackle the misconception that it is something that happens elsewhere. On a personal level, I know that this is something that is widespread, affecting all age groups and social backgrounds, and can be permanently damaging. It is important that collectively we work to protect our children and prevent this from happening.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is the exchange of something a young person may need or want, such as food, alcohol, affection or gifts, for sexual activity with an abuser.

The next edition of 'Your Somerset', delivered to all households in the county, will include examples of real experiences.

Warning signs of CSE include:

- Going missing or regularly returning home late

- Regularly missing school
- Unexplained expensive gifts
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour and suffering from sexually transmitted infections

Reporting CSE:

- If you know/suspect a child/young person is in immediate danger, dial 999 immediately
- If you suspect a child/young person may be at risk, or have info. relating to CSE, you should:
 - Contact the Police on 101, visit a police station, or complete a secure online reporting form at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk Call the SCC's Children's Social care team on 0300 123 2224

PACT (Partners & Communities Together)

Dog fouling on Ilminster rec. continues to be an issue.

Discussion was held re: the provision of disabled access/dropped kerbs for all areas of the town to ensure access for all – current legislation allows for modifications to listed buildings to enable compliance. This may also involve consideration of alternative premises for key services.

The community team at The Minster are looking to further develop the existing Foodbank and Foodshare scheme. The extent to which those in need live in Ilminster and surrounding areas is often not apparent, but does exist.

The capacity of Ilminster's cemetery continues to be under discussion and options are being explored.

DONYATT HALT

A committee has been formed to undertake the restoration of the Halt. A number of local residents and businesses have offered support in providing materials and labour to re-build the hut, to refurbish and replace the Donyatt Halt sign and to have the statue of Doreen replaced.

It is estimated that £3,000 is required to complete the works. Those interested in contributing can offer help or donations. A Let's Rescue Doreen website and bank account has been set up and there is also a collection box in The George, Donyatt.

CHARD MUSEUM

Several successful open days have been held recently to help support fund raising efforts, and local residents are reminded of the benefits of becoming friend or volunteers. Exhibits are changed regularly to encourage repeat visitors.

AGAINST HATE CRIME

In the wake of the Brexit decision and recent reports of race hate crime, local communities have all responded positively to the request to sign up to this, by openly stating their opposition to such behaviour.

FAIRTRADE

Plans are progressing for road signs at entry points to the town, indicating Ilminster's Fairtrade status; the first in Somerset to achieve this. Those interested in getting involved, or local businesses interested in participating, should contact the committee secretary Natalie on 07746727002.

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ATTENDED

As previously notified, I have been away from the 15th Sept.

2/9	Whitelackington VH quiz
4/9	Ilminster Football Club – re: Fairtrade event
5/9	Ashill PC
6/9	Broadway PC
7/9	Yarlington meeting with Riverside, Horton residents
7/9	Chard Museum trustees meeting
7/9	Winsham PC
8/9	Cricket Malherbie parish meeting
8/9	Wadham Awards – Crewkerne
9/9	Yarlington meeting – Yeovil
10/9	Broadway Hill Methodist Church coffee morning
10/9	Chard Museum Heritage Open Day
10/9	Warehouse Theatre performance
11/9	Donyatt VH Breakfast
11/9	Whitelackington Village Hall fund raising event
12/9	Donyatt PC
12/9	Dowlish Wake PC
13/9	PACT meeting Ilminster
13/9	Ilminster Literary Festival meeting
14/9	SCC – officer meeting
14/9	SSDC – planning meeting