

## ILMINSTER DIVISION - SCC COUNCILLOR REPORT MAY 2014

I am endeavouring to correct the many typos that seem to escape my attention each month... During May, across the county, town and parish councils have been holding their annual meetings, and what has become apparent is that the problems are all pretty similar - concerns over planning, lack of public transport provision, highway maintenance, speeding, fly tipping, and encouraging residents to be more involved by becoming councillors.

I have raised particular concerns with the relevant authorities, with success in some cases, whilst other matters are ongoing.

### COUNTY COUNCIL ACTIVITY

The appointment of the new CEO at SCC, Pat Flaherty, who had been acting in the role since the departure of his predecessor, has been welcomed by all sides.

Cllr. Leigh Redman has been appointed as leader of the Labour group at SCC.

Key decisions at this month's full council meetings at both District (which I was unable to attend) and County, involved the appointment of post holders and members to outside bodies. There has been little change, except that I have re-joined SSDC's Regulation Committee.

I continue as a member of the Licensing Committee at SSDC and Cabinet support member for Children and Families at SCC (which includes membership of several related outside bodies), in addition to Scrutiny for Policies and People, Corporate Parent Board, Schools Forum and Chair of SS&L Advisory Board.

At SSDC the decision was taken to continue the current arrangement for sharing the CEO, Mark Williams, with East Devon DC.

### HIGHWAYS

Highways officers continue to be pro-active in meeting with local representatives to resolve ongoing issues, although it has not yet been possible to arrange the promised meeting with Iminster TC. Small improvement schemes confirmed for 2014/15:-

Donyatt	A358 Peasmarsh	Drainage
Chaffcombe	Summer Lane	Drainage
Iminster	Blackdown View	Footway
Iminster	High Street/Butts	Footway
Iminster	Listers Hill	Resurfacing
Ashill	Old A358	Resurfacing

Disappointment has been expressed in relation to the ongoing closure of New Road/The Beacon due to subsidence, which is expected to continue for a further 9 months. I am awaiting response to queries on this.

During the month I met with residents of Kingstone/Dowlsh Wake in relation to concerns over speeding at the jct. bend, where introducing speed restrictions and narrowing of the jct. have been proposed by highways.

Heavy HGV use along this road, and in the Cricket St. Thomas area, has been reported to the relevant authorities. I am still pursuing issues with school transport in the rural villages, and understand that SCC has now intervened to ensure provision starting in September. SSDC's Street Scene team reacted quickly, within 24 hours, to deal with several instances of fly tipping that have been reported locally.

During the bank holiday weekend a number of cars parked on the street in Iminster were issued with parking tickets. After it was raised with me I have been endeavouring to challenge this, with little positive response so far, but will continue to pursue the matter.

## PLANNING

Residents await the outcome of the inspector's report into the direction of growth for Ilminster in SSDC's Local Plan submission, as the hearing takes place in early June. I have asked to join SCC's task and finish group in relation to the proposed future sale of County farms.

## HEALTH

As the Somerset representative for the RD&E, I attended the Devon County Show, and can report good membership results; it is increasingly important for constituents to join their local NHS FTs in order to influence decisions.

I have received confirmation of the decision to continue with stroke service provision at both Musgrove and Yeovil hospitals, for the time being, whilst the outcome of reviews in other areas of the country are received. There is the intention to ensure 24/7 cover between the two hospitals, although not individually, and the appointment of an additional consultant is planned.

Hospital car parking charges have been raised with me, where patients with long term conditions are seen to be a disadvantage when appointments take longer than planned.

In Broadway dog fouling is still at an unacceptable level and increased patrols are requested.

**Confirmation has been received in relation to a further £5k available to me this year to support local Health & Wellbeing schemes. I am awaiting details of the criteria.**

## EDUCATION

SCC has now issued final details of the planned approach to providing free school meals for infants from September, where some schools will be required to contribute from school budgets intended for educational provision. More information on this is available if required.

## SOMERSET GOVERNORS' STRATEGY GROUP

After interviews for the new Executive Officer took place, it was decided to withdraw the offer made, and the group is currently reflecting on future direction.

David Pugh, Chair of Governors of Neroche School, has come forward to join SGSG.

## WILLOW SCHOOLS CO-OPERATIVE TRUST

The group continues to progress and expressions of interest have been received from other schools in the area who wish to consider joining the group.

## SOMERSET IN CARE COUNCIL

I continue to support the group at their monthly meetings by organising and guiding their cooking activities as they move towards independent living.

## SOMERSET RURAL YOUTH PROJECT

I met with the new CEO, Nik Harwood, for an update on plans for improved engagement with local youth activity, particularly in South Somerset, and will be arranging a meeting with interested parties in the near future. David Taylor, ex SCC, has been put forward as Chair of the board, with a decision yet to be made. The bid for Comic Relief funding has been successful.

## POLICING

The police commissioner, Sue Mountstevens met with local residents this month, and confirmed that although there are plans to close down some stations, co-location plans are in place to ensure a continued local presence. Her focus for this year is on greater community engagement, and more victim support. **Grants up to £5k are available for local schemes.**

## BROADBAND

## Agenda No 21

Several local residents continue to have questions in relation to the planned rollout and timing of high speed Broadband provision, particularly in the outlying villages. Having raised this with the cabinet member, I am awaiting an update and will report further on progress.

## Reports from Outside Bodies

### Chamber of Commerce Report for June

#### **Local Plan/Planning**

There was general discussion about the impact of possible developments in the town. There were fears that Ilminster was in danger of becoming a dormitory town given the erosion of employment land. The question was asked whether we thought Swan precinct would ever be developed.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the continued and growing traffic congestion in the town centre.

#### **The First Tuesday**

This idea is being revamped with the introduction of a loyalty card. The proposal is that the card will be stamped when an unspecified, at the moment, sum of money has been spent. The full details have yet to be worked out but obviously the aim is to reward people for shopping locally.

#### **Ilminster on the map for future funding      Making it Local**

A new bid for European funding is being prepared and a number of people in Ilminster have been invited to attend a Making it Local Meeting, including representatives from the business community. Members of the Chamber of Commerce plan to meet on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 5.30 in the Dolphin to consider ideas that might enhance and increase the number of visitors to the town. The following suggestions were raised at the Commerce meeting: a coach park, signage on the A303 and information leaflets about the town.