

ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSSC/SCC COUNCILLOR REPORT JANUARY 2015

COUNTY COUNCIL – The new post holder for Director of Childrens' Services, Julian Wooster, is due to take up his place this coming month.

There continue to be concerns over Adult Social Care in South Somerset, which I am pursuing. SCC is in the process of moving its Social Services staff for the district into SSSC offices at Brympton Way.

High levels of sickness amongst SCC staff (12 days per year) is having a significant impact on service delivery, and plans are now in place to address this.

OFSTED have returned for a visit to inspect progress in relation to childrens' safeguarding and I am due to have a meeting with them early next month.

National Libraries Day is on Saturday 7th Feb.; a number of activities are planned across the county.

A reduction in the bus route subsidies will be of concern to residents, where weekend bus services are affected. The focus on service provision continues to be on fulfilling statutory obligations.

Connecting Devon & Somerset Superfast Broadband Extension is on track for completion, with additional funding (the most granted to any UK project) secured to ensure delivery.

A free workshop on social media for tourism related businesses is planned for 9th Feb. at Abbey Manor, Yeovil.

Funding shortfalls are to be met with money transferred from reserves in order to maintain the current position – no further borrowing, and no increase in council tax (subject to final ratification).

Overall debt has been reduced by £30 million.

The introduction of the central 0300 contact number is close to completion.

SCC SCRUTINY – at the joint Policy & People/Places scrutiny meeting held this month the Mid Term Financial Plan, concentrating on proposed cuts in funding, was the subject of much debate, particularly over support for the homeless; a recommendation was made for further consideration of the planned reduction before a final decision is reached.

HIGHWAYS – Significant funding is planned for improvements and maintenance to Somerset roads in this year. Pothole repairs have increased significantly.

Street Lighting – Concerns were raised over this ongoing problem in Ilminster last month. In following up the issues raised I have not had any further feedback or comment as to a failure to address these issues. The replacement of lights with LED versions has not met with universal approval, where it is felt that these are intrusive for neighbouring properties.

Drains – Work to resolve issues raised over blocked drains etc., has been slow to be completed but is underway. Several local communities are taking a pro-active approach towards tackling some of this work themselves.

Winterhay Lane – Local residents will be dismayed over the lack of further development.

Gypsy/Travellers – An enforcement notice has now been issued to for the illegal occupation of a site along Cad Lane by gypsy/travellers. The gypsy/traveller occupation of the site at Peasmarsh continues to raise issues for local residents, particularly in relation to loose dogs. SSSC are actively seeking a more permanent site for them.

Horton – Speeding is still an issue through the village and concern has been raised over parking outside the pub and its impact on visibility.

SOMERSET GOVERNORS' STRATEGY GROUP – A meeting with the new Exec. Officer is planned for early next week.

PLANNING –

SSSC Local Plan – A final decision on this is to take place at this coming month's meeting.

Greenfyld School has submitted a planning application for improvements to windows and ventilation in Block C.

Horton - residents were dismayed over the failure of SSDC to obtain S106 monetary gain for the Hastoe development at Shave Lane, due to a change in the thresholds. After approaching the developers a contribution of £5,000 was agreed; a most unusual attitude.

SOMRSET RURAL YOUTH PROJECT – Concerns over the continued financial viability last year have been addressed by the recruitment of new CEO, Nik Harwood. The moped loan scheme will be discontinued in March. There will now be a full time youth worker in every district in Somerset. A collaborative ‘Young People Somerset’ group is to be formed.

HEALTH – Several social workers were deployed to hospitals during the month to help alleviate bed space pressures by supporting early release of patients into their own homes. Further Red Cross first aid sessions are planned for the new year. Any other 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 – There have been no reported incidents of hospital acquired MRSA since 2011. A new nutrition and hydration model is being trialled, with the intention for it to be rolled out nationally.

CORPORATE PARENT BOARD – At the Somerset in Care and Leaving Care Councils’ meeting SCC officers and elected members attended a joint development day. Meetings to look at placement stability in some depth have disappointingly revealed several key issues in all cases – challenging behaviour and links with drug and alcohol abuse. I am vigorously pursuing this where health services are failing to engage or offer much needed support.

ILMINSTER DIVISION – SSDC/SCC COUNCILLOR MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES - JAN. 2015

3	Ilminster Senior Citizens’ Lunch
8	Wadham School Awards
9	SSDC – planning meeting
	ImEx meeting
12	SCC – Corporate Parent Board
	Dowlish Wake PC
	Donyatt PC
13	Somerset Schools’ Forum
15	SSDC Full Council
16	Corporate Parent - Placement Stability Meeting
	Somerset Rural Youth Project Board
17	SCC – vulnerable person meeting
	Chaffcombe Wassailing
18	Somerset in Care Council
19	Horton PC
20	Ilminster Town Council
21	Life Education Bus Ilminster
	SSDC – Area West
26	Horton public meeting
27	Jemima Layzell Trust
29	Ilminster Thursday Club talk
	Rotary Youth Speaks at Swanmead
30	SCC Scrutiny