

July Newsletter 2017. Langport & Curry Rivel Division Somerset County Councillor, Langport & Huish ward SSDC District councillor

Dear All,

I have had the pleasure of some very interesting meetings and trips. Hinkley, opening Westlands, opening The Somerset Rural Life Museum, Royal Bath and West consultation, Highways England consultation, Somerset County Business forum to name a few.

I have been to Hinkley site again and whilst I will not get into everyone's thoughts on how we produce our energy, what I will say is the amazing drive this project is bringing not only to our county, but to our own areas through the drip down of the huge benefits to our economy. I know of a few businesses directly gaining from the project in our area via The Somerset Larder. This is a Hinkley supply chain for the smaller businesses who can work collectively together to compete with the size of the Hinkley project.

Somerset Waste Partnership is working really hard to ensure the Recycle More model is the best it can be for us all. None of us are not on board with the notion that we need to recycle more and we are all pushing to ensure there is a great education system on line to encourage our children, to encourage us!

I have had the pleasure of learning more about our Library service and will be attending a day trip tour of many of our leading libraries to gain further insight. I am sure none of us wish to waste funds but we do need to maximise the usage of our Libraries and the service has changed a great deal in recent years and continues to look to further improve the usage and capabilities of our library spaces.

I was very pleased to attend the opening of the new Westlands Leisure complex in Yeovil with David Hall. The facility now needs to make sure it delivers on all counts after the initial period of inquisitive punters disperses. Undoubtedly the sporting facilities are a great asset to the public, and I can see the attraction of the leisure time facility. If we are to compete with the likes of the Bic in Bournemouth we need to ensure the right acts and the right publicity.

I will not be getting into any huge political bursts, I will leave that to the professionals like Derek, but what I will say, for my part, there seems to be a huge need to be totally informative for people. Half the time the message is not getting through and I think many of us are voting on the unknown. I am all about the positive clear message.

I know David Hall is attending the LGA conference so I will feed back any informative that comes my way from that. (Secretly I am looking forward to three quieter days)!

Lastly, I have been very pleased with some of the planning outcomes of late and I believe the district is working really hard with members to look for compromises or positive common sense outcomes.

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COUNTY COUNCIL CONSERVATIVE GROUP

BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

AUGUST 2017

High Speed Broadband: Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) voucher scheme deadline extended to September 30th 2017. By the end of 2019 CDS aims to have increased broadband access to at least 380,000 homes and businesses, this includes the next phase new contracts with Gigaclear and Airband.

Libraries: The libraries service has produced a consultation survey with regards its future configuration and which can be found online at any number of the councils' media forum, or indeed in hard copy from any library. Important that everyone with an interest takes part in the survey and submits his or her views. It is also vitally important that SCC hear why people don't use their library!

Adult Social Care: Historically in Somerset, Social Services have provided a care package which they deemed suitable rather than working with the resident on what they would like help with. The new person-centred approach has resulted in less care home placements and less home care both of which are helping to reduce our overspends. It is worth remembering that for every pound SCC collects in Council Tax, 44pence is spent on Adult Social Care. Last year we overspent by £9.2m and, so far utilising the new approach has reduced that figure by some £2m.

Learning Disability Services: Whilst the Council remains confident in the recent changes to Learning Disability Services a six month review of the transfer to the Community Interest Company, Discovery will come to SCC's Scrutiny Panel in October.

Health Checks: NHS Health Check is a mandated SCC Public Health programme. The check is available for people aged 40 to 74 and assesses a person's 10-year risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease or dementia. The check takes around 20-minute to complete and each person receives a comprehensive health report with their results, together with advice and support about how to maintain good health and make lifestyle changes that will help them to improve their health. The checks are available through a range of GPs, pharmacies and community locations in Somerset which includes recent collaboration with Parish Councils to offer checks within their communities. More information about the Health Checks programme is available at www.somersethealthchecks.co.uk.

Stop Smoking Services: SCC's stop smoking service operates two service models. The core service is targeted to smokers in the general populace and is moving towards a 3-tier service that will "Inform", "Enable" and "Support". The second service has been recognised for its success in supporting women to quit smoking during pregnancy. More information about the service is available at: www.healthysomerset.co.uk/smokefree

Early Help: In 2014 policy decisions were taken to develop early help as multiagency services. Services have been delivered across each area according to need, sometimes in children's centre buildings and sometimes elsewhere, in order to meet that need.

Since then, services have evolved, and now we are at the next stage of implementation. With the Health Visitor and School Nurse services moving from the Health Service to the County Council, commissioned by Public Health. This gives a great push to an integrated early help service for 0 to 19 year olds. As SCC concentrates on new ways of working we will be launching extensive consultation in the autumn as to the shape and delivery of these services.

Children's Social Care: SCC now expects an Ofsted inspection any time from the beginning of September onwards. All the monitoring that has taken place, plus the work that Essex County Council has been doing to support, has made it clear that while there remains much to do, a very considerable improvement has taken place over the last two years. SCC and partners, particularly in Health and the Police are making considerable efforts to embed improvement and make practice consistently high quality

Highways resurfacing: A multi-million pound programme to improve 150 sites covering more than 200 miles of Somerset's roads started at the end of June this year. All the roads due to be surface dressed this year can be seen by visiting the surface dressing map on SCC's website. By surface dressing a road we can significantly extend its life for a fraction of the price of resurfacing and usually without the need for disruptive road closures.

Taunton Park and Ride: It has been announced that subject to negotiations with First the Taunton P&R service on a Saturday will be withdrawn. Use of the P&R is much lower on a Saturday - between a half and a third of that on weekdays and with huge budget pressures SCC have to prioritise statutory services for those without alternative transport. Discussions with the operators will look at ongoing options for opening Saturdays for Christmas shopping and major events plus proving a link service to Musgrove Park Hospital

Recent Press Releases:

County Hall shines a light on Samaritans
Collaboration counts as 67 service continues
Volunteer Drivers
Library Survey
Update on £18m savings plan
Young Carer Volunteers
Sherborne Road, Yeovil reopens after early finish
Children in Care Achievement Awards
Northgate, Bridgwater Memorial to Victorian Workhouse