

MEETING AW.05:0910  
DATE 19:05:10

## South Somerset District Council

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard on **Wednesday, 19th May 2010**.

(5.30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.)

### Present:

**Members:** Cllr. Kim Turner (in the Chair)

Simon Bending	Robin Munday
Michael Best	Ros Roderigo
David Bulmer	Dan Shortland
Geoff Clarke	Angie Singleton
Carol Goodall	Andrew Turpin
Jenny Kenton	Linda Vijeh
Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale

### Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Claire Littlejohn	Community Development Officer (West)
Adam Burgan	Arts and Entertainment Manager
Pauline Burr	Arts Development Officer
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

**(Note:** Where an executive or key decision is made, a reason will be noted immediately beneath the Committee's resolution.)

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### 55. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st April 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

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### 56. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Ric Pallister and County Councillors John Dyke and Jill Shortland.

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### 57. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

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### 58. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public or parish/town councils.

## 59. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman referred to an informal meeting being organised by the Community Development Officer to gather information and review aspirations for the future of the markets in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster. The Chairman mentioned that two representatives from each town council would be attending the meeting and invited members of the Area West Committee who represented those towns to contact the Area Development Officer if they wished to attend.

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## 60. Presentation from Opportunity Chard 2009 Winners (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman referred to the Opportunity Chard event held in April 2009 when grants were awarded to various community groups and introduced representatives from three of the successful groups who gave a short presentation providing an update on the benefits that the Council's grant funding had given them and also on their experience of participating in the Opportunity process.

The community groups represented at the meeting were:-

- Streetspace - who were awarded £5,000 as pump priming funding to enable them to apply to the Lottery's Community Spaces Fund for additional equipment at the Henson Park Skatepark;
- Chard Methodist Church Friday Club - who were awarded £700 to buy additional sports and play equipment;
- South West Somerset Branch of the Alzheimer's Society - who were awarded £3,240 to help establish a memory cafe in Chard.

At the conclusion of each presentation, the representatives answered members' questions on points of detail regarding their projects.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from the organisations for attending the meeting to update members on progress with the projects. Members indicated that they were pleased to note the comments of the representatives and to hear that the projects, which had been supported by grant funding from the Council, were progressing successfully.

**NOTED**

*(Claire Littlejohn, Community Development Officer (West) - 01460 260359)*  
*(claire.littlejohn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## 61. Arts & Entertainment - Service Update (Agenda item 7)

The Arts and Entertainment Manager and Arts Development Officer gave a presentation updating members on the work of the Arts and Entertainment Service with particular reference to Area West, details of which were set out in the agenda report. Reference was made to the service providing a cohesive approach to developing and promoting the arts including the promotion of the Octagon as a 'cultural hub' for the district. It was noted that the aim was to deliver a programme, which inspired, educated and ultimately enriched the lives of those living and working in South Somerset. Arts development work was also highlighted including the work that took place in partnership with different arts

companies to bring a range of arts activities to the district together with the funding of certain activities and providing advice and support.

Members were also asked if they had any suggestions to improve service delivery or potential projects they wished to see incorporated into the 2010-11 service planning process.

During the ensuing discussion, the Arts and Entertainment Manager and Arts Development Officer responded to members' questions and comments. Points addressed included the following:-

- in response to questions, the Arts and Entertainment Manager informed members of plans to bring more orchestral music, opera and light operatic performances to the Octagon Theatre. He also referred to wanting to develop live music events generally and to bring a mixed and balanced programme;
- reference was made to Take Art Live's Village Performance Scheme and in response to requests, the Arts Development Officer agreed to forward details of the programme of performances to members for their information;
- a member referred to the challenges for the Octagon Theatre presented by the current economic climate and the Arts and Entertainment Manager referred to trying to generate additional income wherever possible including promoting the secondary services such as the restaurant, which now used local produce. Events such as the dance classes and SomerZest arts and crafts markets could also attract more income and support other activities. He also referred to the more balanced mix of performances in the summer season attracting more income. He referred to the staffing structure already being lean and to the initiative and creativity of the staff in suggesting ways of saving money. He further commented that he understood that ultimately it would be for members to make decisions on priorities;
- a member suggested that consideration be given to holding shows in the afternoons at a reduced rate for tickets. The Arts and Entertainment Manager commented that he wished to develop matinee use and informed members of some events that had been programmed in the afternoons at more attractive prices. He further mentioned that most events at the Octagon offered reduced rates for group bookings;
- a member referred to the emerging Somerset Cultural Strategy, which was expected to be launched later in the year and queried how it may help the service. The Arts and Entertainment Manager referred to a culture being developed involving the Octagon becoming a cultural hub for the area including outreach work and a more cohesive strategy with other organisations. He also indicated, however, that he would still like to see the Octagon being used as a creative space bringing people in for different activities and not just as a venue for performances;
- members commended the valuable work carried out by Take Art, Actiontrack and Somerset Art Works;
- a member referred to having to travel to Bristol or Cardiff to see the bigger names and queried whether there were any plans to develop the Octagon Theatre in order to attract those performers. The Arts and Entertainment Manager commented that the Octagon had a fixed seating arrangement and some performers would only come to a venue if there were facilities to enable standing room for the audience. The theatre did attract some names but not necessarily the biggest;

- the officers noted the comments of a member who queried what was being done to engage with the small theatres such as the Swan Theatre in Yeovil and the Warehouse Theatre in Ilminster. The Arts Development Officer commented that she was not aware of the theatres having any particular problems although they had not been contacted directly. The member expressed her view that perhaps some form of outreach work may be beneficial. The Arts and Entertainment Manager referred to Somerset Arts Promoters where organisations could share experiences and provide a support network. He indicated that issues could also be picked up through the local press.
- in response to a question from a member, the Arts and Entertainment Manager informed members of the amount of the revenue subsidy in respect of the Octagon Theatre.

The Committee was pleased to note the summary of the Arts and Entertainment events taking place in South Somerset, which were supported, initiated and managed by the District Council and the Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation.

**NOTED.**

*(Adam Burgan, Arts & Entertainment Manager - 01935 845911)*  
*(adam.burgan@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## **62. Area West Committee - Forward Plan (Agenda item 8)**

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the proposed Area West Committee Forward Plan.

The Area Development Manager (West) reported that, in addition to the items shown in the Forward Plan for the meeting to be held on 16th June 2010, he could confirm that two organisations who had been successful at the Opportunity Crewkerne event would be attending the meeting to provide an update on their projects.

**RESOLVED:** that the Area West Committee Forward Plan as attached to the agenda be noted including the above mentioned additional item.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West) - 01460 260426)*  
*(andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## **63. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 9)**

No reports were made by members who represented the Council on outside organisations.

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## **64. Feedback on Planning Applications referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 10)**

There was no feedback to report as there were no planning applications that had been referred recently by the Committee to the Regulation Committee.

**NOTED.**

*(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)*  
*(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

**65. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 11)**

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of a planning appeal that had been lodged.

**NOTED.**

*(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)  
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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**66. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 12)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at the Henhayes Centre, Off South Street, Crewkerne on Wednesday, 16th June 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

**NOTED.**

*(Andrew Blackburn, Committee Administrator – 01460 260441)  
(andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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Chairman