

AW.06:13/14
DATE 16.10.13

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held on **Wednesday 16th October 2013** at Merriott Village Hall.

(5.30 p.m. – 6.55 p.m.)

Present:

Members:	Cllr. Angie Singleton	(in the Chair)
	Mike Best	Sue Osborne
	Dave Bulmer	Ric Pallister (from 5.35 p.m.)
	John Dyke	Ros Roderigo (from 5.35 p.m.)
	Brennie Halse (from 5.35 p.m.)	Kim Turner (from 5.35 p.m.)
	Jenny Kenton	Andrew Turpin
	Paul Maxwell	Linda Vjeh (from 5.40 p.m.)
	Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Zoe Harris	Neighbourhood Development Officer
Greg Venn	Conservation Officer
Alice Knight	Third Sector and Partnerships Manager
Georgina Burton	Chief Executive, SSCAB
Jo Morris	Democratic Services Officer

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

58. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

59. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Carol Goodall.

60. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

61. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public.

62. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

63. Area West Committee - Forward Plan (Agenda Item 6)

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

The Area Development Manager informed Members that an update report on the Chard Regeneration Scheme would be considered at the December Area West Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Area West Forward Plan be noted as attached to the agenda subject to the above amendment being taken into consideration.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

64. Area West – Reports from Members on Outside Bodies (Agenda Item 7)**Crewkerne Leisure Management (Aqua Centre)**

Members noted the agenda report by Cllr. Angie Singleton updating members on Crewkerne Leisure Management.

NOTED.

65. Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Agenda Item 8)

The Neighbourhood Development Officer (West) summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the work of the Blackdown Hills AONB partnership during the last 12 months to which the Council provided joint funding.

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation she informed members of the Activities Programme the AONB team organise each year. Forthcoming events include a wild mushroom foraging event, a hedge laying course and a hedgerow Christmas decorations event. Information was given on some of the AONB wider activities and projects that have taken place during 2013/14 including What Makes A View? and Dunkeswell War Stories. Members were informed of a new Blackdown Hills Nature Futures project being developed which would follow a Discover It! – Share It! – Do it! approach.

Members were also informed that consultation on a new Management Plan for 2015 - 2020 was about to commence and would run for an 8 week period and that further information was available on the Blackdown Hills AONB website.

The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Development Officer (West) for her presentation. The details of the report were noted by the Committee.

Cllr. Ros Roderigo commented that she had been the District Council's representative on the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership Management Group for six years and had attended nearly every meeting, all of which were well attended, vibrant and varied. She referred to a number of activities that the partnership had been involved with locally including a bird box building day and the development of an all mobility path at Staple Hill suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs and buggies that ends at a spectacular view point. She referred to the special characteristics of the Blackdown Hills and the need to support it.

The Chairman asked the Neighbourhood Development Officer and Cllr. Ros Roderigo to forward the Committee's thanks to the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership for all the impressive work being done in the area.

(Zoe Harris, Neighbourhood Development Officer – 01460 260423)
(zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

66. South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau (Agenda Item 9)

Georgina Burton, the Chief Executive of South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau, provided Members with a presentation on the work and future developments of the South Somerset CAB (presentation slides attached). She said the organisation was reviewing its business development plan and would appreciate feedback on future service development. She also said the organisation needed new volunteers to undertake a variety of roles.

During the ensuing discussion, the Chief Executive of South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau (SSCAB) noted the comments of members and responded to questions on points of detail. Points mentioned included the following:

- As part of a new project, she was hoping to train volunteers more locally. A course would be run in the New Year for volunteers from the Chard area. Ideally, she would be asking people to offer 2 half days per week;
- A Public Transport Survey was undertaken last year. A copy would be circulated to members for information;
- Outreach sessions were held every other Wednesday in Chard from 10am-1pm in the Guildhall. It was hoped that in future sessions could be held again on a weekly basis. An ambition for the future would be to have a Chard Advisor but this was reliant on volunteers. Outreach sessions were also available in Crewkerne Town Hall (alternate Thursdays 10am-1pm) and Ilminster Summervale GP Surgery (alternate Fridays 10am-1pm);
- Unfortunately, there was no assistance available with travelling costs for clients. SSCAB tried to give as much advice as possible over the telephone. Home visits could be undertaken if clients had a health problem or disability or had particular reasons why they were unable to access the service;
- There was a growing need for people needing help and cases were taking longer to resolve. There was a particular need for specialist people to deal with debt problems;
- Some of the work of SSCAB was around providing an influencing role to try and improve the services that people are trying to obtain by improving policies and practices;
- SSCAB were working with the Food Banks to try and find ways to improve access;
- The Chief Executive of the SSCAB agreed to take forward the idea of providing a free phone number for people in rural areas;

- With regard to recruiting volunteers, she was planning to issue a press release to raise some interest;
- One of the roles of paid staff was to provide support to the volunteers and to check every case to ensure that the correct advice had been given;
- Figures could be obtained on the number of people from South Somerset seeking advice from Taunton & District Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive of the South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau for her presentation.

NOTED.

67. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of planning appeals lodged, dismissed and allowed.

NOTED.

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

68. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 20th November at 5.30 p.m. at The Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster.

NOTED.

(Jo Morris, Democratic Services Officer – 01935 462055)
(jo.morris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

69. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that the following item be considered in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under Paragraph 3: “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).”

70. Historic Buildings at Risk (Agenda Item 12)

The Conservation Officer summarised the agenda report, which updated members on a building currently on the Council’s Historic Buildings at Risk Register requested by Members in March 2013. The Committee was asked to note and comment on the report.

Members were informed that Recommendation 2 outlined in the report would need to be deferred to a future meeting as under the new Executive Decision Arrangements (Regulations 2012) the Council was required to publish a notice listing confidential reports relating to Executive decisions at least 28 clear days before a meeting inviting public representation.

The Conservation Officer responded to members' questions on points of detail regarding the building.

Members noted that a further update on the building would be given in six months' time as part of the Conservation Officer's historic buildings at risk annual update report.

NOTED.

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Chairman