

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Area South (Informal) Committee** held by video-conference on **Wednesday 6 October 2021**.

(2.00 - 3.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Peter Gubbins (Chairman)

John Clark	Graham Oakes
Karl Gill	Wes Read
David Gubbins	David Recardo
Andy Kendall	Gina Seaton
Mike Lock	Peter Seib
Pauline Lock	Andy Soughton
Tony Lock	Rob Stickland



Also Present:

Officers:

Jo Boucher	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Steve Barnes	Locality Team Leader
Rachael Whaites	Countryside Manager
Ian Timms	Yeovil Refresh Project Manager

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

22. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 31st March 2021, 12th May 2021 and 7th July 2021 were approved as correct records and would be signed by the Chairman.

23. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nicola Clark and Jeny Snell.

24. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

26. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman informed members that:

- Item 9 Yeovil Crematorium update report had been deferred until a future meeting due to no available updates at this present time.
 - Item 7 Presentation on the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan had been withdrawn from the agenda as the presenting officer was off sick. The Case Officer would circulate the Yeovil LCWIP document to members and asked that they direct any comments/question to her and she would collate and refer these to the officer in due course.
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27. Market Review Working Group - Verbal Update (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor Karl Gill gave a verbal update on the work of the Market Review Working Group which included the following:

- Three meetings have been held to date. Discussion included footfall in the town and reputation of the market both from the public and stall holders' perspective.
- Believe there is the need to 'start again' and look to bring in a 'new look' market to the town, including a more artisan approach to include more entertainment such as cooking demo's and busker's etc.
- Next meeting was scheduled for later today 6th October 2021.

During a short discussion, members expressed their wish for a Christmas market to be held in the town. They acknowledged that there would be a 'just eat' festival run by the town council but felt an SSDC Christmas market could be run in conjunction with this.

Councillor Karl Gill noted the comments made and would keep members informed of any updates regarding the Christmas market.

28. Presentation on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Agenda Item 7)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

29. Countryside Service Update Report (Agenda Item 8)

The Countryside Manager presented the report and with the aid of a powerpoint highlighted the following:

- Impact of Covid 19 pandemic including re deployment of staff.
- Huge upsurge of visitors once restrictions eased especially at Yeovil Country Park with increase of appreciation of the park.
- In response to recovery SSDC held summer of play over 27 events with great attendance and build confidence to mix in groups once again.
- Delivered activities and events with partners including the forest school and park yoga.

- Introduced the new 'Visit South Somerset website' including video footage of drone filming.
- Update on Ham Hill Country Park including:
 - The Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant totalling £68,000. This went towards three extra members of staff at ranger level, path repairs and litter pick station.
 - Progression through the development stage of the Heritage Fund Project, working with new groups including Polonia and Friends.
 - Extension of woodland play zone.
 - Community involvement from EuCAN and ADM Protexin to aid in the dry stone walling.
 - Supporting volunteers to return, some not being on site for 18 months or more.
 - Facebook Live streaming tree planting event with Norton and West Chinnock Primary school.
- Update on Chard Reservoir and welcomed new ranger, improving accessibility and new local nature reserve management plan for 2021-2025.
- Update on Yeovil Country Park including:
 - Busiest ever year with huge increase in takings in the Café.
 - Unfortunately graffiti issues are a problem in the park but are working with the police to mitigate this issue.
 - Developed activities and events online.
 - Friends of Yeovil Country Park obtained grant funding to plant 570 trees on Wyndham Hill.
 - Volunteers have returned in full strength delivering three sessions every week.
 - Working to improve habitats with the Yeovil Rivers Community Trust including surveys for wildlife and habitat management monitoring.
- Appointment of Community Heritage Officer who is working with schools, community groups and delivering volunteers sessions.
- Update on Moldrams and Eastfields Nature Reserves.

During discussion several comments were made including the following:

- Should consider holding a 'dry stone walling' training session.
- Need to ensure the new 'Visit South Somerset' website is well promoted and publicised.
- Congratulated the team on the magnificent works undertaken across the district and the marvellous asset Yeovil Country Park is to Yeovil town.

The Countryside Manager thanked members and noted the comments made.

The Chairman also voiced his thanks and appreciation of the work carried out by the Countryside Manager and her team.

30. Yeovil Crematorium Update (Agenda Item 9)

This item was deferred from the agenda.

31. Progress Update Yeovil Refresh (Agenda Item 10)

The Yeovil Refresh Project Manager presented the report and updated the members on the following:

- The Transport schemes now ready for full consultation due to start in October being sections at Hendford and Reversal of traffic flow Stars Lane and South Street.
- Further ongoing work for Improvements to sections at:
 - Stars lane/old Station Way
 - Old Station Road Crossing
 - Middle Street Junction with South Western Terrace
- Further ongoing work regarding the Link via the Yeovil Country Park and Penn Mill station.
- Public realm works including:
 - Westminster Street works now in progress with Wine Street works hopeful to start in next few weeks.

In response to questions from members, he noted the following:

- Aware that toilets are situated under the Triangle area with a survey already carried out, but unsure the overall impact until excavation begins on site.
- Working towards bringing forward schemes for the development sites.
- Already liaising with Yeovil Town Council regarding the relocation of this year's Christmas tree due to works being carried out in the Triangle.

There were no further questions and members were content to note the report.

32. Update Progress Report Area South - Area Chapter 2021 (Agenda Item 11)

The Locality Team Leader presented the report, which provided Members with an update of this year's delivery of the Area Chapter for Area South. He explained that it had been a difficult year due to the Covid 19 pandemic with many Locality staff being redeployed. He explained uncertainty around whether events could go ahead but that a play day event was held in the summer at Yeovil Recreation Centre and 3 out of the 4 weeks 'out of school' programme also being held, which was a great achievement giving the restriction in place.

He also highlighted other work being carried out including the Yeovil Skate Park project to improve the three skate parks within Yeovil. He explained that tenders had been received with anticipation to appoint contractors soon and potential for rebuild to commence in early summer 2022.

In response to queries from members, the Locality Team Leader advised that:

- Currently no date to review chapter but acknowledged a refresh of the chapter is requested by members. He will action this request and report back to members on the way forward.
- Noted the request on the current position of the Ecological improvements to upper Milford Valley and would action this and update the member direct.
- Acknowledged the comments and appreciation expressed on the support provided by the Locality Team regarding both the new build of the West Coker Recreation Centre/Pavilion and the Westfield Community Association Garden project.

- Noted the request on the current position of the required improvement of the footpath at Larkhill Road and Larkhill open space and would action this and update the member direct.

There were no further questions and members were content to note the report.

33. Area South Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12)

Members requested that they be kept informed regarding the Market Review Working Party. It was reiterated a monthly verbal update would be given at committee. It was also requested that the Yeovil Crematorium Update report be included in the December meeting.

34. Planning Appeals (For Information) (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted the Planning Appeals.

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Chairman