

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area West (Informal) Committee** held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software **on Wednesday 18 May 2022.**

(5.30 - 6.22 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Jason Baker (Chairman)

Mike Best	Jenny Kenton
Dave Bulmer	Paul Maxwell
Martin Carnell	Tricia O'Brien
Brian Hamilton	Sue Osborne
Ben Hodgson	Oliver Patrick
Val Keitch	Martin Wale



**Officers:**

Jo Morris	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Adrian Moore	Locality Officer
Nathan Turnbull	Locality Officer

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

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**89. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 February 2022 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

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**90. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ray Buckler, Robin Pailthorpe and Garry Shortland.

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**91. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**92. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 4)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee would be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 5.30pm and would be a virtual meeting.

**93. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 5)**

There were no questions from members of the public present at the meeting.

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**94. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman made no announcements.

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**95. Community Grant to Ark at Egwood Indoor Activity Space (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 7)**

The Locality Officer presented the report which asked member to consider awarding a grant to Ark at Egwood for two containers that would be used for arts, crafts and various other projects with the community. The total cost of the project was £47,900 and the grant request was for £12,500. He confirmed that funding from The Clarks Foundation had been secured.

Ward member, Councillor Paul Maxwell expressed his support for the application. He said that he had visited the site a few times and it was a fantastic facility that provided excellent services to adults and young people including those most vulnerable in the community. The facility was mainly land based but also required indoor space for teaching and learning. He paid tribute to all the staff and volunteers at the facility and urged members to support the grant application.

In response to questions, members were informed that pre-application discussions had been held and a planning application submitted for the project therefore any grant awarded would be subject to planning permission being granted.

At the conclusion of the item, members unanimously agreed the recommendation of the report subject to any planning permission that may be applicable.

**RESOLVED:** That Area West Committee recommend to the Chief Executive that a grant of £12,500 be awarded to Ark, (Acts of Random Kindness) towards installing a new indoor activity space, to be allocated from the Area West capital programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A) and any planning permission that may be applicable.

**Reason:** To consider a grant funding request for installing a new indoor activity space.

*(Voting: unanimous )*

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**96. Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 8)**

The Locality Officer introduced the Manager of the Blackdown Hills AONB, who provided Members with a short presentation on their work during 2021/22 (A copy of the

presentation slides are available upon request). He informed members about the following work/projects:

- Commenting on 15 planning applications and 3 pre-application enquiries.
- Nature Recovery, Climate Action and Carbon Audit
- Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme
- Somerset Nature Connections including the Watch Project in Chard and links with Sweet Surprise in Ilminster
- The AONB Management Plan review proposed to start in early 2023 ready for the revised plan to run from 2025-2030
- Working with Young Somerset to carry out a diversity and inclusion audit to ensure inclusion and diversity was embedded throughout the work of the Blackdown Hills AONB.

He concluded that they hoped to return to hold more in person events during 2022/23.

The Locality Officer said that members were being asked to consider continuing SSDC's contribution to the core funding of the AONB Partnership of £6,000 in 2022/23.

Councillor Martin Wale, as the SSDC representative of the Blackdown Hills AONB, said that the Blackdown Hills AONB were undertaking a great amount of work with the amount of funding that they received and urged members to support continuing SSDC's funding contribution.

In response to a member question, the Locality Officer confirmed that the other local authority partners had contributed the same amount as in 2021/22 for this financial year.

During the discussion on the item, members thanked the Blackdown Hills AONB for all their work.

The recommendation to continue the SSDC contribution to the core funding of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership was proposed and seconded and unanimously agreed by members.

**RESOLVED:** That Area West Committee members agreed to recommend that the Chief Executive agrees to continue SSDC contribution to the core funding of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership of £6,000 in 2022/23.

**Reason:** To continue the SSDC contribution to the core funding of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership in 2022/23.

*(Voting: unanimous)*

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## 97. Stop Line Way Progress Report (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 9)

The Locality Officer presented the report which asked members to agree to allocate £12,000 from Area West reserves towards a refreshed Sustrans Feasibility Study to cover the route east and south of Chard. He said that a refreshed feasibility study would help to secure local government funding and key into new central government funding opportunities.

During the discussion on the item, members' comments and questions included:

- The funding would allow solutions to be found to the problems that have been identified in the past preventing completion of the full Stop Line Way Route.
- How would the Sustrans Feasibility Study help with unlocking the land preventing completion of the route?
- What had happened to the previously approved funding towards legal fees?
- What was the status of the Stop Line Way Steering Group?
- Who would be monitoring the £12,000 funding and would there be any regular progress updates?

In response to comments and questions from Members, the Locality Officer advised:-

- £12,000 would be the maximum amount that the Feasibility Study would cost and would comprehensively cover the ten key deliverables as outlined in the agenda report.
- He would provide a written response in relation to land ownership and legal fees.
- One of the key parts of the work was to reform the Stop Line Way Steering Group.
- Progress of the project would be reported to the Stop Line Way Steering Group.

At the conclusion of the debate, members unanimously recommended that £12,000 be allocated from Area West Reserves towards a Refreshed Sustrans Feasibility Study.

**RESOLVED:** That Area West Committee recommend that the Chief Executive allocate £12,000 from Area West Reserves towards a Refreshed Sustrans Feasibility Study.

**Reason:** To consider allocating funding towards a Refreshed Sustrans Feasibility Study focussing on re-routing a section of the Stop Line Way Route 33 long distance, coast to coast, multi-use walking and cycling route south-east of Chard.

*(Voting: unanimous)*

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## 98. Area West Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

Members queried when the Historic Buildings at Risk report would be coming forward to Area West Committee as the item had been on the Forward Plan for some time.

The Chairman advised that the Flooding report would be SSDC related and would not include the Somerset County Council Section 19 reports for Ilminster and Chard, as they had not yet been completed.

The Chairman advised that the Broadway Playing Field grant application would come forward for consideration as soon as all the relevant information had been submitted by the applicant.

A member requested a report on the Parrett Trail Tunnel and this was agreed to be added to the Forward Plan.

A member queried whether the grant request for Ilminster Town Football Club Play Park could be brought forward to the June Area West Committee meeting rather than July.

**RESOLVED:** That the Area West Forward Plan be noted.

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**99. Planning Appeals (for information) (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted the details of planning appeals that had been received and dismissed.

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Chairman