

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Tuesday 16 January 2018
Winsford Village Hall, Winsford**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)	C Knight, Brushford PC
J Anson, Cutcombe PC	V White, Cutcombe PC
P Wood, Dulverton TC	M Rawle, Dulverton TC
K Coulman, Dulverton TC	N Thwaites, Dulverton TC and WSC
M Ellicott, Exford PC	D Powell, Luxborough PC
M McCoy, Porlock PC	R Hall, Porlock PC
B Hitchcox, Selworthy & Minehead Without	J Parsons, Timberscombe PC
D Godsall, Winsford PC	B Flanagan, Winsford PC
J Davies, Withypool & Hawkridge PC	S Williams, Avon & Somerset Police
T Saunders, ENPA	R McArthur, ENPA
C Thomas, ENPA	F Nicholson, SCC
D Peake, SCC Highways	K Mills, WSC
B Heywood, WSC	P Pilkington, WSC
C Hall, WSC/TDBC	M Barrow, Connecting Devon and Somerset

1 Election of Chairman

- 1.1 Agreed that Councillor S Pugsley be elected as Chairman of the Exmoor Panel for the next 12 month period.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

- 2.1 Agreed that Councillor M Ellicott be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Exmoor Panel for the next 12 month period.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 November 2017 and Matters Arising

- 3.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4 Apologies for Absence

- 4.1 Apologies for absence were received from A Vigars (Exmoor PC), P Webber (Selworthy and Minehead Without PC), R Manicom (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service), A Sparling (Luxborough PC), PCSO B Stevens (Avon and Somerset Police) and K Harwood (SCC Highways).

5 Have Your Say and Police Issues

- 5.1 With the agreement of the Chairman, the Have your Say and Police Issues items were held together.
- 5.2 Sergeant Stuart Williams, the Neighbourhood Sergeant for Exmoor, Minehead, Williton, Watchet and Wellington, attended the meeting and advised that crime rates in the Panel area since the last meeting were very low – only a couple of motor vehicle thefts had been reported. He stressed the importance of reporting all crimes and highlighted the fact that this could also be done online.

- 5.3 One issue that the police were addressing was the use of unroadworthy or unlicensed and uninsured quad bikes on roads as this was leading to some anti-social behaviour.
- 5.4 The police were also seeing an increase in the demand for dealing with vulnerable and mental health services particularly in the Dulverton area, and were working with the Minehead and Williton Oneteam partnership group to tackle some of the issues.
- 5.5 In response to a question as to whether the matter of a continually sounding car alarm would be dealt by the police, it was advised that normally a common sense approach would be taken and the police would try to find out and contact the registered keeper of vehicle.
- 5.6 Responding to a query concerning a poaching incident, it was stressed that poaching was given a local priority by the Exmoor team and police investigations would be thoroughly undertaken.

6 Excessive Speeding throughout the Exmoor National Park

- 6.1 Cutcombe Parish Council raised particular concerns about the issues of speeding and speed limits. Road users were not taking any notice of the road conditions and not taking enough care and attention as to the state of the roads or the type of roads they were driving on. Reference was made to discussions held at a previous Panel meeting regarding the possibility of using reflective collars on moor ponies to cut down the accident rate, as well as improving visibility by trimming the gorse back along the side of the roads.
- 6.2 Accidents would decrease by imposing a lower speed limit and a question was asked about how a 20 mph speed limit could be introduced in Cutcombe and Wheddon Cross.
- 6.3 The Community SpeedWatch scheme had proven to be very successful and this was seen as a good way to enforce existing speed limits through the villages. Driving appropriately to the road conditions also needed to be enforced.
- 6.4 Issues relating to the amount of signage required to make a legal limit enforceable and where to put the terminal points of speed limits were raised by David Peake, the SCC Highways Representative.
- 6.5 The Porlock Parish Council representative advised there was a 20 mph speed limit in Porlock and reports of traffic speeding through the village were regularly being reported by residents. The introduction of floral chicanes to force cars to slow down was highlighted as being effective in other parts of the country.
- 6.6 The police recognised this to be a national issue. Unacceptable driving by regular repeat offenders should be reported to the police and an analytical tool was also used to monitor high accident areas and police resources were prioritised to where they were most needed. Sgt Williams suggested Panel members contact his team who would assist in the implementation of a Community SpeedWatch.
- 6.7 The Chairman suggested that a Highways representative who specialised in setting local speed limits be invited to a future Panel meeting to address the issue in more detail.

7 Magna West Somerset Housing Association

- 7.1 Tony Murray, Managing Director of Magna, sent his apologies and would present his annual report at the Panel meeting to be held on 7 June 2018.

8 Housing Policies in the Exmoor National Park Authority Local Plan

- 8.1 Ruth McArthur and Tessa Saunders from the Exmoor National Park Authority presented the item. The Exmoor National Park Local Plan to 2031 had been adopted and all Parish and Town Councils would receive a printed copy in due course.
- 8.2 A summary guide of the Local Plan housing policies circulated at the meeting is attached at Appendix A to the notes of this meeting.
- 8.3 A point was raised regarding the local housing connection and the fact that the Section 106 legal agreement restrictions could be overridden by tenants participating in house swaps. It was agreed to investigate how this would affect the local occupancy criteria.
- 8.4 An issue was raised concerning the introduction of universal credit and its impact on market rent levels. The recognition of the need for social rented housing in the Local Plan was welcomed.
- 8.5 The Chairman thanked Ruth and Tessa for their comprehensive presentation and welcomed further updates in the future.

9 Roll-out of broadband across the National Park

- 9.1 Matt Barrow attended the meeting and presented a detailed update. Information on the progress of the phase 1 and 2 rollouts was given and he reported that approximately 5,500-6,000 properties were receiving superfast broadband on Exmoor via BT and Airband.
- 9.2 Alternative, cost effective technologies such as Whitespace and mixing wireless with fibre were also being considered to deliver broadband in rural areas where fixed wireless broadband could not be achieved.
- 9.3 It was reported that the successful Connecting Devon and Somerset broadband voucher scheme would be reintroduced to allow people who were excluded from Phase 2 to receive satellite and 4G connectivity.
- 9.4 Various questions were put forward by members of the Panel.
- 9.5 Cllr Karen Mills encouraged anyone who had received positive feedback from customers receiving Airband to forward them to her or the Chairman as it was considered that now would be a good time to assess the quality of their service.
- 9.6 The Chairman thanked Matt for attending the meeting and answering questions.

10 Update on Signposting Project

- 10.1 Charlotte Thomas attended and provided an update on progress to date. She was delighted to inform that there were over 100 volunteers currently involved in the project who had all received the necessary training on health and safety.

- 10.2 Restoration work had taken place in the parishes of Brompton Regis, Clatworthy, Cutcombe, Dunster, Exford, Exton, Hawkridge, Luxborough, Porlock, Timberscombe, Withypool and Wootton Courtenay. Work was soon to be scheduled in Carhampton, Simonsbath and Stogumber.
- 10.3 Physical repairs to signposts was progressing although slower than expected and surveys were either underway or completed for the whole of the project area.
- 10.4 A decision would have to be taken as to whether qualified contractors would undertake work on those signposts located close to the road where volunteers deemed the repairs to be too dangerous to be carried out by themselves.
- 10.5 In response to a query, it was advised that the parts for the vandalised signs at the top of Andrew's Hill had been ordered from the foundry and would be restored as soon as possible.
- 10.6 As prices for replacement signpost parts had increased considerably, Charlotte requested Panel Members to recover, if possible, any parts that were found to have fallen off so they could be reassembled rather than having to buy new.
- 10.7 An update on the replacement of brown signs was provided.
- 10.8 The December 2017 signposting project newsletter was circulated at the meeting and is attached at Appendix B to the notes of this meeting.
- 10.9 It was noted that the project was succeeding very successfully and the signage across Exmoor was showing noticeable improvement for which the Panel members were very grateful.
- 10.10 The Panel members took the opportunity to thank and congratulate Charlotte and the team of volunteers for the great work undertaken so far.

11 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services Issues

- 11.1 There was no report submitted in this regard.

12 SCC Highways

- 12.1 David Peake attended the meeting and presented the planned works in the Exmoor Panel area – the report is attached at Appendix C to the notes of this meeting.
- 12.2 David agreed to chase up previous requests to investigate a situation concerning slippery roads around Dulverton and problems reported at Luckwell Bridge, as no responses to these two issues had been received to date.
- 12.3 Suggestions on how to improve road closure signage to provide clearer instructions to road users was discussed.
- 12.4 Various other detailed points were raised by members of the Panel which were noted down by the Highways representative.
- 12.5 The Chairman thanked David for attending

13 Exmoor National Park Authority Issues

13.1 There was nothing to report under this item.

14 Parish Lengthsman Scheme Update

14.1 It was advised that invoices were being issued to the participating parish councils imminently. No problems had been reported and the Scheme was running smoothly.

14.2 Specific reference was made to the fact that a number of parish councils would be writing in to request for the work log to be reinstated as it was felt it to be beneficial for the Parish Lengthsman to complete it once work was finished.

15 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 8 March 2018 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 7 June 2018 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 11 September 2018 at 7.30 pm (Highway Warden's meeting at 6.30 pm) – Winsford Village Hall
- 13 November 2018 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall
- 22 January 2019 at 7.00 pm – Winsford Village Hall
- 7 March 2019 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm