

Somer Valley Forum Annual Report February 2019

Introduction from the Chair and Vice Chair

Working Together

Thank you to all the members and participants of the Forum for their contributions over the past year. All the Forum meetings are open to the public and we have been pleased to see a few new faces at meetings. If there are organisations that would like to become voting members of the Forum, do let us know as there are places available for membership.

The Forum provides a place for discussion on local issues and through these, ideas and solutions can be developed. By working collaboratively, we can deal with some of the challenges together.

Our Forum is one of six across the district which represent a diverse range of needs and priorities. We are pleased that the Council and partners recognise these differences and value the local information and feedback the Forums provide. Along with the other Forum Chairs, we meet quarterly to discuss common issues across the district. The meetings also include representatives from the Avon Local Councils Association as well as the representatives from the Voluntary and Community sector.

The information from our Forum meetings is public, so please do share it within your local communities. Not everyone wants to attend meetings in the evening but might like to take part in a consultation, or attend an event if they are aware of it.

To assist with staying connected, our Communities Team, who also support the Forum, provide a monthly 'Interagency Bulletin' containing information about events, updates, consultations, training, grants and funding programmes. If you haven't signed up and would like to receive this, contact alison_wells@bathnes.gov.uk or you can download a copy of the latest bulletin from the Council's Website:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/working-partnership/interagency-meetings>

A review of the year

At our AGM last year, we heard from the Council's Emergency Planning Team on their role, Community Places of Safety and the importance of having local emergency plans in place. We also received an update from Somerset Coalfield Life at Radstock Museum on their recent developments as well as hearing about plans for the 2018 Somer Valley Walking Festival.

We have introduced an item on the agenda 'Community Showcase' which gives local organisations an opportunity to raise their profile, share good practice and contribute to discussions that are relevant to the local communities. We have been pleased to welcome a range of speakers over the past year and are always interested to hear from anyone wishing to take part in this.

Where possible, we have tried to theme the Forum meetings to include a range of speakers and specialists to talk on specific topics. The theme in March was 'Health & Wellbeing' which included information about the Council's 1 Big Database, Rainbow Resource and Wellbeing Options on-line databases; an update on the Council's Fit for Life Strategy, a presentation on the local activities provided by Age UK B&NES and a very moving talk from a service user of Developing Health and Independence (DHI) which has a hub in Midsomer Norton. This meeting also included an update on the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.

In July, the main theme of the meeting was 'Rural Transport' – an issue which affects communities across the district. The Forum discussion followed a meeting of local parishes held by Timsbury Parish Council and was introduced by Cllr David Collett. This was followed by information from

Somer Valley Forum Annual Report February 2019

Chris Head, Executive Director of the West of England Rural Network (WERN) and Chair of Chew Valley Forum on engagement between community transport providers and the West of England Combined Authority. Also, presentations from local community transport providers SWAN; Dial-a-Ride; the Wellow Community Bus and Midsomer Norton & Radstock Community Bus. Since this meeting, the issue has been discussed by all the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Forums at their combined meeting. A working group met in early January 2019 and the matter will be taken forward to Parish Liaison in March. This is an excellent example of how an issue raised through the Forum has been progressed. At this meeting, we also received an update on the Joint Community Safety Plan from the Council and the Police.

September's meeting was very inspiring, with a focus on 'Young People'. We were very pleased to welcome the leaders and some young people from Peasedown St John's Scouts and St John Ambulance Cadets to talk about their activities in the local community. The meeting also included presentations from organisations working with young people to highlight some of the issues they face today and how they can access support. We were delighted to welcome local Member for Youth Parliament, Hannah Powell, as a guest speaker as well as representatives from Off the Record; Boys in Mind; Mentoring Plus; B&NES Youth Service and the Radstock and Westfield Big Local. This meeting also included a presentation from the Council on air quality locally and the proposed Bath Clean Air Zone.

In November, the Council presented 'Our Budget, Our Plans, Our Communities' to all the Forums, with senior officers and Cabinet Members setting out the challenges and opportunities ahead. This enabled the Forum to highlight some of the issues facing our local communities and we welcomed the chance to comment on the plans. Our contributions have been included in the Council's Corporate and Budget Planning reports which you can view [here](#).

We have been fortunate to have the Police attending some of our Forum meetings. We appreciate that they are operational so it's not always possible for them to join us however they continue to provide us with valuable information on crime trends in the area and address concerns raised.

The Somer Valley Forum had some funding available which was administered on its behalf by Quartet Community Foundation. This funding has now been allocated to organisations working in the Somer Valley – details are at the end of this report.

We are really delighted to hear that as a result of a lot of hard work Timsbury Hub, the new Community Library, opened in November and has been a real success. We are also excited to hear that Peasedown Community Library plans are well underway. We look forward to hearing more about these projects in due course and hope that they may come along to a future Forum to talk about their work.

Below is a summary of our achievements highlighted against the priorities you have raised with us. We want to ensure that the Forum continues to bring forward the issues that matter most to you and your communities, so please do let us know of any topics you would like to see at future meetings, whether as a main theme or as part of the Community Showcase.

Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

Lynda Robertson (Chair) and Karen Walker (Vice Chair)

Somer Valley Forum Annual Report February 2019

You asked	We did
Key Theme: Economy including jobs and employability	<p>The last AGM in February 2018 featured a presentation from Nick Hall, Chair of Somerset Coalfield Life at Radstock Museum. The Somer Valley has been successful in achieving Enterprise Zone status. The Economic Development team continues to engage with the Forum, presenting to them in March. They also liaise with individual Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will receive further updates on tourism and the economy in 2019. There is an opportunity to explore ideas for joint projects and collaboration.</p>
Key Theme: Young people	<p>The Forum devoted its September meeting to this theme, hearing from young people themselves on the positive ways in which they engage with the community. Also from a range of speakers representing organisations supporting young people to highlight the services on offer and the issues facing young people today.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will continue to seek ways in which to engage younger people. There is an opportunity to explore ideas for joint projects and collaboration.</p>
Key Theme: Health & Wellbeing	<p>The Forum devoted their March meeting to this topic, hearing from a range of speakers and being made aware of how to access information on local activities and support.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will continue to receive information and updates regarding Health & Wellbeing. There is an opportunity to explore ideas for joint projects and collaboration.</p>
Key Theme: Transport	<p>The Forum devoted their September meeting to this topic, hearing from Timsbury Parish Council on a meeting of local parishes called to discuss the issue. They also heard about engagement with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and from a range of local community transport providers on the services they offer. The issues raised have been discussed by the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Forum at their regular meeting, a working group has met and the matter will be discussed by Parish Liaison at their March 2019 meeting.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will be kept informed of progress. There is an opportunity for members to contribute to these wider discussions and ideas for collaboration.</p>

**Somer Valley Forum
Annual Report February 2019**

You asked	We did
Key Theme: Reducing social isolation – especially in villages	<p>This theme has links with the Health & Wellbeing and Transport items above. Some of the Somer Valley funding has been allocated to projects which support this theme.</p> <p>Action: This has links with the local transport item. There is an opportunity to explore ideas for joint projects and collaboration.</p>
Emerging Theme: Community Resilience	<p>The Forum requested an item on Emergency Planning and Community Places of Safety which was given at their February 2018 meeting.</p> <p>Action: The Council's Emergency Planning team will continue to engage with local communities on Community Places of Safety and local emergency plans.</p>

The Somer Valley Forum comprises the parished areas of Farrington Gurney; High Littleton; Midsomer Norton; Paulton; Peasedown St John; Radstock; Timsbury and Westfield.

Corresponding Members of the Forum are Camerton and Shoscombe as well as the Mendip parishes of Chilcompton; Coleford; Hemington; Kilmersdon and Stratton-on-the-Fosse.

Somer Valley Forum Annual Report February 2019

Funding for the Somer Valley

Somer Valley Small Grants Programme

This fund provided grants of up to £1,000 to organisations working to benefit people who are disadvantaged (including through rural isolation) on projects being delivered in the Somer Valley. All funds have been allocated and it is now closed to new applications.

Organisation	Funding Awarded	Project
Swallow	£899	New and replacement items of equipment and uniform for their café at St Nicholas Church Tea Rooms in Radstock.
Sporting Family Change	£1,000	To run cluster group sessions for teenage boys from the Somer Valley who are severely emotionally and behaviourally challenged, vulnerable and with complex needs.
Wansdyke Play Association	£995.25	To run play sessions in Midsomer Norton, Westfield and Radstock.
Age UK B&NES	£750	To purchase a plumbed in hot water urn to provide filtered boiling and chilled water throughout the day at the Orchard Hall, Midsomer Norton.
Carers' Centre, Radstock	£1,000	To help support development of carers' coffee mornings held at Mardons Sports and Social Club in Westfield.
Evolve Music Project	£1,000	To fund six, monthly sessions with participants aged 11-18 years from Wansdyke Play Association's 'Saturday Club'. This grant went towards employing three professional music leaders to facilitate 90 minute engaging and inspirational music sessions.
Camerton Community Hall	£1,000	To upgrade insulation before the installation of a new heating system.
Somerset Coalfield Life and Radstock Museum	£985	To support improvements to the replica schoolroom.
Village Agents – Timsbury	£497.41	To assist with room hire costs at the new Timsbury Hub to facilitate new opportunities for local people to meet organisations supporting health and wellbeing services and others that support independent living. These bookings will also support the new community library and hub facility in Timsbury.
Total Awarded	£8,126.66	