

Glastonbury Town Council
Somerset County Councillor Report - January 2020

Small Improvement Schemes

The 20mph zone for the Town Centre has been advertised but Highways sent us an incorrect map. The correct map does not include Chilkwell Street from Bere Lane to Cinnamon Lane junction and we are waiting for a site visit with Jeff Bunting, the Highways Engineer. I have pointed out that there is an advisory 20mph on the bend by Challice Well, so it would seem ridiculous to drive past a 20mph sign, then enter into a 30mph zone along the narrow road and including the improved pedestrian crossing before the roundabout, and then go into a 20mph zone after the pedestrian crossing.

SCC Improving Lives Fund

Cllr Napper and I have been informed that the application for funding for £1260 to pay for an inscribed oak bench (from sustainable sources) plus installation in the sensory garden in St Dunstons House has been successful.

I am also hoping to complete an application for gardening tools for the community garden at the Red Brick Building before the fund closes at the end of January.

SCC Scrutiny Meeting – 5G

Due to the number of budget papers coming to the February Scrutiny meeting, it has been decided to defer the 5G item to the March meeting.

Glastonbury Living Spaces Panel at MDC

The GLS Panel will meet again in February. I hope that there will be an update from Wessex Water on the odour zone and any possible further mitigation work at the sewerage works.

Major Road Network

There has been no update from SCC since end November. It's possible that we won't hear any more until the Government reshuffle has been completed in February.

Future of Local Government in Somerset (FOLGIS)

There has been considerable coverage of this subject since the external consultants' report was published on 8th January. SCC and the Districts have each published a statement on their preferred option. The County Council will pursue a single Unitary Authority for Somerset, while the Districts will pursue greater collaboration between the four Districts.

Councils will have to wait for the Government reshuffle, and then ask the Secretary of State (or Minister) for an invitation to submit a business case. If that is granted, then it will take up to six months for consultants to be engaged and to complete the work of a full business case.

It may be that the Districts take the same approach and ask for an invitation to submit a separate – and different – business case.

If SCC is successful in moving to the next stage after receipt of the business case, then a Shadow Authority would be set up for a whole year before Unitary Authority elections. It's possible that the County Council elections could be pushed back a year to allow for such a timetable but it's all speculation at present.

A single Unitary Authority for Somerset would be likely to have between 100 and 125 Councillors, rather than the combined number of 268 County & District Councillors at present (30 of whom are both County & District Councillors).

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