

**Glastonbury Town Council**  
**Somerset County Councillor Report – May 2020**

**Small Improvement Schemes**

The programme of SIS improvements across the County has been stalled due to lack of contractors currently able to commence work on the agreed schemes. The most recent announcement may mean that more contractors are able to recommence work, it would make sense to complete the scheme on the A361 while traffic volumes are reduced.

**Improvements to walking and cycling**

A paper was circulated to all County Councillors on 5<sup>th</sup> May regarding space for safe cycling and walking during lockdown. A number of parish/towns/city councils have been asking for temporary facilities such as pop up cycle lanes and pedestrianisation. The paper acknowledges that the promotion of safe walking and cycling is a priority for health & wellbeing as well as climate initiatives and that safe distancing is the greatest priority of all at present.

The paper's concerns are specifically about safe passing of vehicles, safe access for buses, taxis, emergency vehicles, waste collection, key worker vehicles and home deliveries. There are also concerns about temporary measures being introduced that could not become permanent and the possibility of confusion amongst pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

The Government has since issued a statement, on 9<sup>th</sup> May, which can be read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

The next County Council briefing is on Friday of this week, if I hear anything then or at any other time that may help the Town Council prepare any case for walking/cycling improvements, I'll be sure to email the Town Clerk.

**Glastonbury Living Spaces Panel at MDC**

I am hoping that recent Zoom meetings and telephone conversations with Police may help in moving forward the work of the Panel. Thank you for including me in the meetings.

Please be aware that the Living Spaces Panel is a Mendip District Council internal panel, chaired by Cllr Ros Wyke, the Leader of the Council. I was invited on to the panel as a County Councillor.

The work of the Panel since last June has concentrated on establishing land ownership of the County Council and District Council within the Glastonbury boundary and then establishing the limitations on use of those lands. It has been a disappointing experience to realise that there is so little land with potential for any permanent or transit site.

Wessex Water and the odour zone, the flood zone with consideration of climate change, contamination, planning permission are all factors that affect any potential for alternative living spaces. Privately owned land is not available for sites, everything possible has been fully explored and there has been no land purchase possible, nor any land offered for use.

In the meantime, the number of residents unhappy with all Councils' approach and response to the situation remains the same (or increases) and takes up huge amounts of time for the Police, the Town Clerk and Councillors. None of us have a solution, we can only work together better to make clear where responsibilities lie, where actions can and cannot be taken and then try to establish a plan that may or may not include the Town Fund and social housing/alternative living spaces as part of economic regeneration.

**Traveller Encampments**

Mendip has produced an updated list of sites and numbers of vans/caravans/tents in the past week and it does not show any marked increase in numbers since the required provision of portaloos and

water bowsers intended to stop people moving on. There has been movement between the different sites and evidence of at least one person moving caravans either on to sites or between sites. Residents in Cinnamon Lane and on the Redlands estate are even more concerned with what is seen as deliberate flouting of the guidelines on gatherings, that concern has been widely shared right across the town as we all know.

### **SCC Scrutiny Meeting – 5G**

The 5G item at the March Scrutiny meeting was interesting but there are no current plans to continue with this strand of Scrutiny work as the entire work programme at SCC has been affected by Covid-19 and the subsequent mass redeployment of staff.

### **Voluntary Support Network in Glastonbury**

Like Glastonbury, the Support Group in Street has been incredibly busy with between 50 – 60 volunteers drawn from the community and organisations as diverse as the Salvation Army and Millfield School. I am in regular contact with Mark, Tanya and Kama of the Glastonbury Support Network and feel that our support groups are complementary. We have shared working on the back-office functions, for example paying for shopping, to the benefit of both groups. Of course, we have no idea how long the volunteer effort will be needed at this level and we share concerns about the future once people start returning to work and so we lose volunteers. There is a very short gap between retirement age and the age of 70, the age when people are told to self-isolate regardless of physical health. I know many people who have a long history of voluntary work that are now the people needing support, and am concerned that we may find that we have increasing demand and a reducing voluntary workforce over the next few months.

### **SCC Scrutiny Meeting – Covid-19**

There is a Scrutiny meeting today (Monday) and if there is any new information about Covid-19 in Somerset, I will send a separate report. At the last briefing it was reported that the number of care homes with residents who tested positive has remained stable at approx. 15% of the care homes in Somerset.

Locally I have received anecdotal evidence of people who work in care homes being infected and having to self-isolate but I have no idea of numbers. SCC has committed huge amounts of money to supply of PPE to all health and care sectors, also a temporary uplift in the fees it pays for care of people in Somerset.

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