

July 2020 Mendip District Councillor report - Cllr Lindsay MacDougall

Climate & Ecological Emergency Group (CEEG): This cross-party group has reported that their MDC (Mendip District Council) webpage is being updated to be more public friendly; MDC has recruited a new Programme Manager to implement CEEG projects for one year, to work with SCAN (Somerset Climate Action Network who work closely with Somerset County Council), all within the limitations of Covid (furlough, etc).

Equalities Steering Group: a decision to support the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-semitism has been deferred in order to look at the context in which other councils have signed up to this. Black Lives Matter was on the agenda and it was concluded that there were no statues in Somerset that might be contentious.

Licensing: this meeting included a pre-run and approval of safeguarding training for taxi-drivers.

Covid and Inequalities: I attended a Zoom meeting, 'Using Marmot Principles to tackle health inequalities and Covid 19', which included speakers from Bristol & Coventry City Council explaining how they had tackled issues of deprivation and health proactively, eg. providing subsidised fitness facilities and keeping children's centres, libraries and green spaces open.

MDC July Cabinet: Weed control was on the agenda; there is to be a pilot project to recruit volunteers to help weed their neighbourhood with an officer to coordinate, in order to continue avoiding the use of glyphosate. There is a programme to install rapid charge Electric vehicle charge points, working with Somerset County Council.

Unitary Council proposals presentation: I attended a Zoom presentation by David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council. The business case for unitary proposals has recently been published, detailing cost benefits, etc. Any possible changes will not happen at MDC before Spring 2022.

Planning Board: there were two Zoom meetings of the board this month.

Active Travel Cell: this group is proposing a number of improvements to cycle routes to connect up the district for cyclists, including upgrading the Strawberry Line Path(www.thestrawberryline.org.uk),

the old railway line which ran between Evercreech and Clevedon. I am working on the Glastonbury to Wells route which has unfortunately met with objections from parish councils affected. I welcome any proposals by Glastonbury residents to feed in to these more permanent measures in response to the Covid crisis, in addition to the temporary closure of high streets and so on. It is hoped this will help to improve and increase walking and cycling in the area, and reduce car use.