

Steve Henderson

District Councillor's report Dec '20

In the past month the majority of meetings I have attended have been to do with the Glastonbury Football Club and Fusion Towns' Fund bids.

It seemed to me that the best outcome for the Town would be a joint bid that would benefit the most users of these facilities. The football club could develop their site at Abbey Moor stadium and Fusion could invest in the Tor Sports and Leisure site. Not only for football and cricket but gymnastics, bowls, netball and gym users as well. Also for the many non- sport clubs and associations that at present use both venues to pursue their activities.

At one point, with massive help of Paul Manning, I thought that we had worked out a good joint agreement but somewhere along the line we are now in a position whereby Fusion and the Football club are putting in separate bids.

Glastonbury FC had hoped to buy Abbey Moor but now the owner is asking far more than we had anticipated so they have had to bid for more than £2 million that has been earmarked for sport.

It's worth mentioning, I think, that James Heappy, our MP and vice chair of the Board had told the Football club that they should bid for more than the £2 million that Tina had advised was available. I would like to know why he was unilaterally giving out different advice to that of MDC.

We are now in the hands of MDC to see what they make of the bids and who is going to get what funding. There is a meeting with Tina McEwen on Wednesday evening where she will be explaining the view of the board and what will happen next.

I also attended (virtually) a meeting of the Full MDC. The main item was The Future of Local Government in Somerset.

The Council was asked to endorse the 'Stronger Somerset' proposal for the creation of two unitary Councils within Somerset. The proposal was carried.

There was also a long debate about whether a decision made by the Cabinet to use land for affordable housing in Frome, Street and Glastonbury was legal or not. It transpired that it was, but because the decision had been made without consulting either the rest of the Council or the public it was felt that it had been done in a less than satisfactory way. After a couple of hours of deliberation and a lot of legal talk it was decided that the decision be put on hold while the cabinet, the chief executive and the monitoring officer worked out the way forward.

I look to my fellow District Councillors to confirm that this account is correct as there was a fair bit of confusion on the night.