

## District Councillor Report to Glastonbury Town Council – December 2020

**Cllr. Jon Cousins**, Mendip District Councillor for Glastonbury St. John's Ward.  
Member of Standards Committee and Audit Committee.

### **Affordable and Social Housing Programme:**

As was reported to Glastonbury Town Council at our last meeting, on 2nd November, Mendip's Cabinet members agreed to move forward with an affordable and social housing programme – and approved the transfer of four Mendip-owned sites to the Aster Housing Group. These four sites comprised of Cemetery Lane in Street, Cranhill Car Park in Street (part only), land adjoining Easthill Cemetery in Frome, and – pertinent to Glastonbury – the Norbins Road Car Park.

Since the last Glastonbury Town Council meeting – and following a 'call in' by members of the District's Scrutiny Board – the Mendip Scrutiny Board considered the decision on 16th November and decided to refer this back to Mendip's Cabinet due to concerns regarding ecology, drainage, consultation, best value, and consideration of alternative sites.

Following the Mendip Cabinet meeting on 26th November, Cabinet members confirmed their approval of 2nd November 2020 to proceed with the transfer of the Glastonbury and Street sites, "*subject to contract and planning consent*", for the development of affordable and social housing, but to pause the proposed transfer of land adjoining Easthill Cemetery in Frome to Aster to allow time for a review of issues raised by Members...

The Cabinet's decision on 26th November has been the source of divergence between the Cabinet and some members of the Full Council; raising strong debate at the Mendip District Council meeting on 3rd December, and questions about the constitutional facility and lawful capacity of the Full Council to challenge the decisions of the Cabinet.

While recognising "*the acute need for the provision of affordable housing, particularly housing at a social rent, across the District and supports initiatives to address this need*", of particular interest to Glastonbury Councillors will be the proposal that: "*in respect of the sites at Cemetery Lane, Street, Cranhill Car Park, Street (part only) and Norbins Road Car Park, Glastonbury (emphasis mine), Full Council requests that Cabinet pause the proposed transfer of these sites to allow for a full consultation to be undertaken and for detailed reports considering the issues raised by the public and Scrutiny Board to be prepared and fully considered by the Cabinet and Scrutiny Board prior to giving final approval*".

There was much debate, some emotive, on the motions put forward related to the Cabinet's decision on 26th November. **These were not resolved during the meeting of Mendip District Council on 3rd December...**

### **I attended the following Mendip meetings:**

Tuesday 17th November: On-line Planning Training.

Friday 27th November: IT Training at Canard's Grave.

Monday 30th November: attended on-line 'One Somerset'