

Steve Henderson DC's report May 2021

My MDC activity this month has involved three Full Council meetings which is a lot in one month.

Two involved the One Somerset/ Stronger Somerset debate. The first was a response to the One Somerset proposal and the third was a vote on whether there should be a referendum of the people of Somerset on the preferred choice of the Unitary question.

On the latter, it was generally thought that there should have been a third option to keep things as they are now as well as the two Unitary choices. Although there was a lot of discomfort within the Council about what we were voting on, the decision to hold a referendum was approved by 28 in favour to 10 against.

I think I'm right in saying that the Secretary of State doesn't have to agree with the Council's decision anyway.

The 2nd meeting was mainly concerned with election of Chair, Vice Chair etc and the formation of Committees. I am back on the Planning Board.

After the Property and Assets meeting last Wednesday I emailed Gerard with some afterthoughts about the reinstating of the benches in the High Street, as I'm sure you know.

I agree with Mike Smyth's reply that the benches and the street drinkers should be dealt with as separate issues.

As well as enforcing our non-drinking laws we need to strengthen our street trading enforcement. MDC drew up some rules about what was allowed in the way of street trading some years ago and we need to revisit those rules.

There is also the lesser, but still annoying, misdemeanours like chalking on the pavement. I have talked to the young lady that does the chalking and asked her to stop but to no avail. I think Mel Rowlands had said that she'd been issued with an ASBO so what is the next move if she insists on continuing to deface the pavements.

There was a MDC campaign a few years ago to remove A boards from the pavements. Our pavements are very narrow at certain points in the High Street and A boards make them even more congested at busy times. There is a massive A board at the entrance to the Gauntlet which I think the Council should have a word with the owner about.

Finally, St. John's school have been in touch with me about the signage to the school in the High Street. There are two signs on a lamppost outside the church that are pointing in the wrong direction. If no one from the Council staff has time to reposition the signs I will have a go myself at the weekend.