

District Councillor Report - August 2021 - Lindsay MacDougall

This month I have attended the following meetings as district councillor:

Multi Agency Group (MAG) to address the **roadside and other encampments** in town.

Licensing Sub-Committee

I will be resuming attendance at Planning Board and full Licensing Committee (which require in-person attendance) in September now I am fully vaccinated.

Councillors have also been briefed on the **new single unitary council** which will replace Mendip District Council (MDC) in April 2023. A shadow authority will be elected in May 2022 which will work alongside the district council until it is abolished in April 2023. You can subscribe to a Newsletter keeping you up-to-date with developments

here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/local-government-reorganisation-in-somerset/>

There are regular updates on the MAG on the town council website; currently enforcement is taking place to prevent new arrivals staying and plans are being prepared for a long-term solution. If you wish to report on encampments, please contact:

glastonburyencampments@somerset.gov.uk or phone 0300 123 2224

Bin collections have been erratic in places recently due to Covid staff shortages; if this affects you, please report it after 7pm on the due day via My Waste Services at somersetwaste.gov.uk. Somerset Waste Partnership aim to return for reported missed rubbish within two working days, and reported missed recycling on the next scheduled day. If recycling is missed and reported twice, it should be collected within two working days. For delayed recycling options, including food waste, visit <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/what-to-do-with-recycling-if-your-collection-is-delayed/>

Most residential development in the west of the district has been put on hold due to the **phosphates problem** and excess on the Levels wetlands; the 5 district authorities have jointly commissioned consultants to support the delivery of a Somerset-wide Nutrient Strategy, expected to be completed in the Autumn. MDC has also written to the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government & the Dept of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs on the issue to request help in order to deliver the required housing

Mendip District Council is encouraging residents to take part in a survey, the results of which could bring an **electric car and bike sharing scheme** to the district for the first time. The Council wants to gauge interest in the idea of running a network of shared, low and zero-emission cars and bikes across Mendip. Co Cars, a not-for-profit social enterprise, already operate such schemes successfully in the South West, and are the company behind the transport survey. More info at: co-cars.co.uk You can share your views here: www.mendip.gov.uk/paths. The survey is now live and will run until 31st August 2021.

Re. the council's Climate & Ecological Emergency declaration, MDC have issued a media release which I will reproduce here, in brief:

Mendip drives down carbon emissions - but further, urgent action required

* Mendip District Council is determined to drive down CO2 emissions. However the Council recognises urgent, ongoing action is required by residents, businesses and central government to avoid a climate crisis.

* Mendip has announced a number of initiatives to encourage behaviour change, including a 'Climate Action Pledge Card' which suggests lifestyle swaps, such as buying local produce, planting bee-friendly flowers, and switching to a green energy supplier. Every pledge residents' sign-up to will make a difference to their carbon footprint, and to Mendip's overall emissions. The Pledge Card can be downloaded from the Council's website here: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8650/Climate-Action

* The Council has also launched a £50,000 Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund, where community organisations can apply for up to £2,000 to support eco projects such as tree planting, sustainable food production, greener travel and renewable energy schemes. Applications for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund may be made here: www.mendip.gov.uk/ccf. Applications close on 31 August 2021.

* The installation of electric vehicle charging points in council-owned car parks is due to begin shortly with partners Franklin Energy, encouraging drivers to switch from fossil-fuelled vehicles, to cleaner electric ones. Charging points will be located in Frome, Glastonbury, Street, Wells and Shepton Mallet. Also at council-owned car parks, and displayed at Somerset Waste Partnership recycling centres, residents will have noticed anti-idling signs have been installed, designed to discourage unnecessary engine idling and improve air quality.

* Mendip is one of 300 councils nationwide to have declared a climate emergency. In February 2019 it pledged 'to make best endeavours to enable the district to become carbon neutral by 2030'. However recent modelling of a Future Emissions Pathway, produced by the Council and adopted by Cabinet, showed the district is currently on course for a 30% reduction in emissions - way off its carbon neutral target. The Cabinet-approved emissions roadmap needs ambitious policy and funding from central government. It also requires significant behaviour change, including a 70% shift to electric cars, an increase in solar energy generation to 80 Megawatts (which equates to approximately five solar panels for every 10 households), deep retrofits to 7,700 domestic properties and a 10% increase in forest cover, throughout the district.

* Explore Mendip's climate change pages here: www.mendip.gov.uk/climatechange

* **Are you interested in planting trees in your local area?** We can offer guidance, finance and support to make tree planting happen. Email: neighbourhoodservices@mendip.gov.uk