

## Mendip District Councillor report - January 2022 - Cllr Lindsay MacDougall

I attended the following Mendip District Council meetings/briefings this month:

**Somerset Waste Partnership Board (SWP):** a Reuse and Repair scheme is to be piloted; SWP perform well compared to the UK generally on plastics recycling. I asked about the new incinerator at Avonmouth and was assured that there is a very low bar for the minimum waste required for the incinerator to be viable.

**Matabo training:** to ensure GDPR and cyber-security compliance.

**Local Government Reorganisation:** a number of communities are putting together pilot Local Community Networks: Frome is focussing on social care and families issues; Bridgwater on devolution; Exmoor on Highways and Wincanton & Bruton on Health & Wellbeing; the Heart of the Levels (Compton Dundon, Somerton and Langport) is also piloting a network. The new unitary councillor role was also discussed; in Wiltshire, for example, a unitary councillor works for a minimum of 27 hours per week.

**Local Plan Part 2 (LPt2) briefing:** current yearly housing numbers (to be built) are set by central government at 600 over the district, compared to the original 420, and therefore we cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply, which means development may be approved that lies outside of the development zone; the approval of the LPt2 (later in the month at **Full Council**) will alleviate this pressure a little and give much needed weight to the other policies in the Plan. The inspector's removal of Green Spaces allocation from the plan will impact Glastonbury, which now has the fall-back original position of the protection of allocated Open Areas of Local Significance (fewer than originally drafted in the LPt2; see <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/localplan2002/maps/policyselect.htm>); this may be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan that will now be resumed and look to completion and referendum as soon as possible this year.

**Full Council:** as per above.

**Somerset Bus Partnership (by Zoom):** bus services have now reached bottom of the league table in the country for satisfaction, at 47% satisfied. Somerset County Council have now completed their Bus Service Improvement Plan where they ask for an ambitious £163 million of the new government funds for buses. Some of the aims are: to run core countywide network every 60 minutes; run all of this 7am - 7pm with added night-time services; a flat fare of "£1 around town" trial. The Council aims to improve satisfaction levels to 80% in 2030, increase the number of tickets sold to 15 - 25 yr olds from 15% to 50%, and the number of journeys by bus, compared to other forms of transport, from 1.8% to 7-10%, all by 2030. This would go a long way to improving the high levels of carbon emissions from transport in Somerset (44.1% compared to 27% UK average).