District Councillors Report 2020

**FEBRUARY 2020**

**SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Mark and Wedmore Ward**

**Polly Costello –** [**polly.costello@sedgemoor.gov.uk**](mailto:polly.costello@sedgemoor.gov.uk) **01934 713564**

**Will Human –** [**will.human@sedgemoor.gov.uk**](mailto:will.human@sedgemoor.gov.uk) **01278 641795**

**VIEW FROM SEDGEMOOR**

Polly went to her first Axe/Brue Environmental committee meeting where Tony Bradford was voted in as chairman.  Issues discussed were the overview of activities and environmental responsibilities, legal compliance to do with works carried out on water courses, and a long discussion took place on the removal of invasive aquatic species such as floating pennywort, parrots feather, water primrose and zebra mussels.

Double yellow lines are gradually appearing around Wedmore and so far seem to be having a positive impact.  Polly has reported the state of Snipefield Lane not only to the farmers but to SCC Highways, whom have filled some of the potholes and will hopefully do the rest soon.

Polly and Will attended a members briefing at SDC about the Northgate development in Bridgwater. It is a regeneration project based on a multiscreen cinema with food and beverage outlets. SDC also launched their new digital system and branding. They also attended the full council meeting where there was a member of the public, Andy Tiller, who had brought in a petition to ensure more trees are planted to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Will chaired the Audit and Standards Committee for the first time in his role as Vice Chair.

Polly and Will wish all their constituents a very happy and healthy New Year

**MARCH 2020**

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**VIEW FROM SEDGEMOOR**

Polly attended the Grants Award Sub-Committee.  There were 4 applications totalling £7,200, amongst which £2,000 was awarded to Wedmore Scout Group to help with the refurbishment of the kitchen.  There was £30k left in the pot for the last round of applications in the current year and if not spent, the money doesn't roll over.

Will was one of three Councillors to sit on a panel to decide who was to take up the position of Assistant Director for Inward Growth and Development.  He also attended the Axe Brue Drainage Board Finance Committee and Audit and Standards Committee at SDC.

Polly chaired two Licensing Panels.  The first was Hackney Private Hire driver's renewals (several drivers had failed to undertake mandatory safeguarding training, and it was our duty to determine whether they were fit and proper to hold their licence).  Two were surrendered and nine will be revoked on 31st January unless they attend another safeguarding session that was on 30th January.  The second panel was an exempt report and therefore the details cannot be shared.

Will and Polly both attended their Parish Coiuncil meetings, and Polly chaired a PC Highways committee meeting in Wedmore.  She also went to the WPAA (Wedmore Play Area Association) and the Adapting the Levels Environmental meeting, which was focussing on Tealham and Tadham Moors and she is hoping that lot more the Young Farmers attend this interesting group as it is of great importance to the next generation.

Both had meetings with local residents on various issues within the community, they are always happy to help if they can.

**APRIL 2020**

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Polly went along to The Adapting the Levels environmental meeting held at The Swan, there was as interesting talk from Nick Pyatt from TRIOSS, who is a climate specialist.  Ash die back was discussed and how we can mitigate for the future by planting different species of trees and how excess rain water can be stored to be used in the dryer months. Young Farmers are welcome to come along to these meetings as the future of local farming is in their hands.

Polly attended Wedmore Health and Wellbeing Project to make Wedmore a dementia friendly community, not just focusing on the patients with dementia but also their carers.  We discussed meeting with the local schools to talk to the pupils about dementia and how many of the local businesses are happy to take a training course, so they can help their customers with dementia.

Will attended an Audit and Governance committee meeting before future meetings were cancelled.  Both attended their various Parish Council meetings too.

Polly went along to the Talking Café in Nanny Ida’s and also went along to the Somerset Drainage Board Consortium AGM , which is a meeting of the Axe/Brue, Parrett, and North Somerset IDB board members.   We received a report from the chairman, Tony Bradford and also from the Chief Executive, Roger Burge.  Within these reports were the strategic review of machinery and manpower, water resources, enforcement of the land drainage act and the board’s byelaws.  Iain Sturdy gave us the engineer’s report, which contained operations and maintenance, development and control.

Polly chaired a Licensing Panel to consider an application for a full variation to an existing premises licence in respect of Ocean View Holiday Park in Brean, following several objections being received.  The licence was granted with several new conditions.

Obviously with the current virus crisis all meetings at SDC have been cancelled for the immediate future.  Both Will and Polly are heavily involved with helping their residents and communities at this horrible time, Polly is the coordinator for Wedmore and Will has volunteered for SDC’s distribution and helpers as well as an NHS helper.

We know there have been some issues with rubbish collections along with works to water leaks on the highway and that the tips are closed, but please remember that these are difficult times for all and if your bins aren’t collected it’s for a valid reason and SWP will try to collect them the following week….....everyone is experiencing difficulties and we must remember to be kind.

Please look after your neighbours, helping with shopping, prescription collections or simply a chat across the garden fence, keeping 2m apart, a simple chat can be all the comfort some people need.  Thank you to all those who have volunteered, some of whom haven’t been called upon to help yet, but it is early days and we really appreciate all the acts of kindness out there in our communities.    Remember the local food shops are all open for business and we can organize deliveries of groceries and prescriptions…....please DO NOT HESITATE in contacting us.

TAKE CARE AND KEEP SAFE.

Polly and Will.

**MAY 2020**

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So much has happened over the last two months since the last Parish Magazine but in brief:

Sedgemoor is at the heart of the local response to the Corona Pandemic where a team was quickly established to be able to deliver the many Government guidelines and policies to help people through the emergency. Receiving and delivering food to the ‘shielded’, finding accommodation for the homeless in the area, continuing all the vital services and working with the emergency services to try and keep people safe.

The SDC officers worked tirelessly, mostly from home, and the wheels of local government continued by the use of remote meetings; Licensing, Audit and Standards, Planning and Executive meetings all met. It is planned that remote meetings will continue for the foreseeable future.

Polly Costello organised the Wedmore Village coronavirus volunteers and Will has been part of the ‘Responders’ network and helped with the SDC local deliveries.

Both Polly and Will want to thank all of the heroes of local services especially the waste collectors who continued to work.  Also the local shops that stayed open for the communities and have done so well in helping out the more vulnerable residents.  They also thank not only the NHS and Care Workers but also services such as the posties and local delivery drivers.

At the time of writing this, SDC wish to point out that although parks are open, the equipment in them are still off limits.

The tips have started to reopen but with new rules in place.

Please keep an eye on the Sedgemoor District Council website for further updates and information or contact Polly Costello or Will Human

Will Human

Polly Costello

**DECEMBER 2020**

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Polly and Will both attended Full Council via Teams;  the session was confidential so we can't tell  you about it.

Polly spoke in favour of a local application at the Planning Committee, the officer's receommendation was to refuse but Polly, along with the help of Sue Worrall and the applicant, managed to get the recommendation turned around, thanks to some commen sense from the Committee, but it was a tight 7-8 in favour, but a victory none the less!

Both of us have been involved with some gardening duties this month ......... Will helped replant the pots in Burnham with winter pansies and Polly joined Green Wedmore pulling up nettles in the soon to be Worthington Woods project;  we were all tingling after that.  Polly also helped litter pick and found loads of empty plastic bottles in the ditches up at Heath House.

Will and Polly attended an Axe/Brue drainage board site visit as a bank had breached and is a flood risk.   There were four meetings in succession, totally 10 hours in all, drainage is a complex issue!  We had so many meetings as the CEO had reported a Grievance against him, so we were invited to attend an extraordinary meeting to discuss.  We also attended a fourth meeting to vote on a Strategic Review of Plant, Machinery and Manpower.

Will attended an Audit and Governance Meeting.

Polly chaired a Licensing and General Purposes committee.  Will was present as a committee member.  There was an interesting presentation from Lizzie Kingsbury from CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) about Gambling Harm Awareness.   The committee meeting followed this talk where we considered proposed amendments to the taxi Licensing Policy and Conditions.  Licensing panels were noted since the last Committee was held.

A brand new walk-through Coronavirus testing facility opened in Bridgwater on Sunday 8th November, as Somerset County Council makes testing more widely available and accessible.

Achieved with the co-operation of Bridgwater Town Council, Serco and Deloitte, the walk-through site will be the first of its kind in the County and is one of two new sites set up recently, the other being at Yeovilton.  Testing is available only for those with coronavirus symptons - a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste.  Anyone with one or more of these symptons should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

We both wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Covid-19 free New Year.  Let's hope that 2021 is easier for us all.

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