

Somer Valley Forum

Annual Report February 2018

Introduction from the Chair and Vice Chair

We would like to firstly thank all the members and participants of the Forum for their contributions and input over the last year. Members of the Forum have played a significant role in raising issues of local concern; providing local knowledge to organisations to help them shape the services they provide and sharing information with local communities. The Forum meetings are open to everyone and we would ask those attending to assist in promoting them so that more local people are able to contribute.

There are now six Connecting Communities Forums each representing a different part of Bath and North East Somerset. All the Chairs and Vice Chairs of these Forums meet together at least four times per year to discuss the issues raised by the areas they represent as well as common themes and agenda items. These meetings are also attended by officers from the Council and representatives of the voluntary sector and Avon Local Councils Association. This ensures that items raised by Forum members are fully discussed and taken forward.

By being better informed and working together, we can deal with some of the challenges that our communities face. The Forum meetings not only act as a platform for discussion but bring people together to help solve problems. What matters most are the connections that are made and how, collectively, we work together outside of the meetings.

Over the last year, the Forum had an opportunity to learn, at an early stage, about proposed changes to local Library Service, Waste Services and Electoral Arrangements. A move towards themed meetings led to interesting presentations and discussions on Community Resilience; Health & Wellbeing and Local Housing Needs. As part of these meetings, we welcomed speakers, not only from the Council but Greenhill House Leonard Cheshire Home, the Village Agents, Virgin Care, Swallow Charity and Julian House.

We continue to have regular attendance from the Police and they recently informed the Forum they are reverting back to their neighbourhood teams. Over the past two years, the Forum has expressed concern over policing structures so this was extremely welcome news.

Staying connected is really important and our Communities Team, which supports the Forum, also provides a series of monthly bulletins to share information about events, news, training and funding programmes. If you haven't already signed up contact Alison_Wells@bathnes.gov.uk or you can download a copy of the latest bulletin from the Council's Website:-

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/working-partnership/interagency-meetings>

On the topic of funding, in September 2017, we also launched the Somer Valley Grants Fund which is being administered by Quartet Community Foundation. To date, over £4,500 has been granted from this to organisations supporting disadvantaged people in the Somer Valley. We also heard from Cllr Paul Myers at

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the March 2017 meeting about the Community Empowerment Fund and are pleased to report on the grants awarded from this to Somerset Valley parishes. There are further details on page 4.

Also below is a summary of our achievements, highlighted against the priorities you have identified. We want to ensure that the Forum continues to discuss the issues that matter to you most, so please do let us know of any topics we can bring forward to future meetings. We also welcome any organisations that wish to present to the Forum as part of the informal element of the meeting.

Thank you again for your attendance and support during 2017 and we look forward to seeing you in 2018.

*Lynda Roberston (Chair) and
Karen Walker (Vice Chair)*

You asked	We did
Key Theme: Economy including jobs and employability	<p>The last AGM in February 2017 featured presentations on local tourism from David James, Chief Executive of Bath Tourism Plus, Nick Hall, Chair of Radstock Museum and Tina Veater, Managing Director of Ignyte/Chair of the Somerset Valley Chamber of Commerce. This was followed by a workshop on 25th July 2017 which allowed the Forum to explore the area's attractions and assets in more detail. The Somerset Valley has been successful in achieving Enterprise Zone status. The Economic Development team continues to engage with the Forum and individual Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will receive further updates on tourism and the economy at the February 2018 and March 2018 Ordinary Meeting.</p>
Key Theme: Young people	<p>The Forum has expressed its desire to engage more young people. During 2017, discussions were held with Off the Record about how this might be achieved. The Forum also expressed its particular concern about sofa-surfing among young people and the wider topic of local housing need. The Forum's September meeting heard directly from young users of SWALLOW's services and how the charity works in partnership with the Council and housing associations to address their housing need. B&NES Council also highlight other joint initiatives which included the YMCA supported housing for young people aged 18 – 24 years. A presentation was also given by Julian House about sofa-surfing and homelessness.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will continue to seek ways in which to engage younger people.</p>

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You asked	We did
Key Theme: Health & Wellbeing	<p>The Forum hosted a meeting in July 2017 with this theme. They firstly received a thank you from Greenhill House Leonard Cheshire Home for their assistance with improvements to the fishing and boccia facilities they enjoy.</p> <p>The Forum also heard about the latest Sugar Smart campaign and how Radstock and Westfield Big Local are supporting this.</p> <p>The Forum also welcomed the CCG and Virgin Care as part of on-going engagement. Forums have also been asked to put forward representatives to sit on the 'your health, your voice' meetings. The representative for Somer Valley is Richard Robertson.</p> <p>Action: The Forum will hear about Wellbeing Options and Fit for Life at its March 2018 meeting.</p>
Key Theme: Transport	<p>At their September 2017 meeting, the Forum received a presentation on the Somer Valley Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Action: A request has been made for further discussion on public transport and potential local solutions. This has been added to the Forum's future agenda plan along with an update on the West of England Joint Spatial and Transport Plan.</p>
Key Theme: Reducing social isolation – especially in villages	<p>The West of England Rural Network's Village Agents attended the July 2017 meeting to talk about their work, particularly in the Chew and Somer Valley.</p> <p>Action: This has links with the local transport item added to the future agenda plan.</p>
Emerging Theme: Community Resilience	<p>At their March 2017 meeting, the Forum heard about Community Resilience and Flood Risk. This led to a request for a further agenda item on Emergency Planning and Community Places of Safety.</p> <p>Action: The requested item will feature at the February 2018 AGM.</p>

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Funding for the Somer Valley

Somer Valley Small Grants Programme

This fund provides grants of up to £1,000 to organisations working to benefit people who are disadvantaged on projects being delivered in the Somer Valley.

Further information is available on the Quartet website:

<http://quartetcf.org.uk/grant-programmes/somer-valley-small-grants-programme/>

Organisation	Funding Awarded	Project
Swallow	£899	New and replacement items of equipment and uniform for their café at St Nicholas Church Tea Rooms in Radstock.
Sporting Family Change	£1,000	To run cluster group sessions for teenage boys who are severely emotionally and behaviourally challenged, vulnerable and with complex needs.
Wansdyke Play	£995.25	To run play sessions in Midsomer Norton, Westfield and Radstock
Age UK B&NES	£750	To purchase a plumbed in hot water urn to provide filtered boiling and chilled water throughout the day at the Orchard Hall, Midsomer Norton.
Carers' Centre, Radstock	£1,000	Funding to help support development of carers' coffee mornings held at Mardons Sports and Social Club in Westfield

Community Empowerment Funding

This was a small grants scheme from Bath & North East Somerset Council designed to support improvements to a local area or neighbourhood. The amount available was based on the size of the local population and available by parish where these exist. The table below shows the grants awarded in the Somer Valley.

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/connecting-communities/community-empowerment-fund>

Parish	Funding Awarded	Project
Farrington Gurney	£460	Playground maintenance
High Littleton	£934.50	Outdoor table tennis
Midsomer Norton	£5,500	High Street directional signage
Paulton	£2,660	Refurbishment of BMX Track
Peasedown St John	£3,230	Accessible gates for play areas
Timsbury	£1,320	Multi-sports field upgrade
Westfield	£2,930	Accessible swing for play park