

Somer Valley Forum AGM Report 2019 - 2020

The Somer Valley Forum comprises the parished areas of Farmborough (to be ratified); Farrington Gurney; High Littleton; Midsomer Norton; Paulton; Peasedown St John; Radstock; Timsbury and Westfield. Corresponding Members of the Forum are Camerton and Shoscombe as well as the Mendip parishes of Chilcompton; Coleford; Hemington; Kilmersdon and Stratton-on-the-Fosse.

Introduction from the Chair and Vice Chair

Thank you to all the members and participants of the Forum for their contributions over the past year. By discussing and identifying issues in our communities and working collaboratively, we can help to address some of the challenges together.

The theme of the 2020 AGM is Climate Emergency, the most important issue we are facing, not only as local communities but also globally. It may seem too big an issue for us to solve alone but there are many actions that can be taken if we work together and support each other. The topic will remain a key priority for the Forum as it will be important for us to explore the opportunities and work through some of the challenges together.

Another key topic for the year ahead is 'Compassionate Communities', a collective term to recognise the individuals and organisations that work to support others when needed. We have seen many local examples of this as part of the Community Showcase element of our Forum meetings. This is a popular feature and has highlighted some very dedicated and committed local organisations who are helping people daily to improve their health and wellbeing. The Bath and North East Somerset Third Sector Group (3SG), which represents the Voluntary and Community sector, is working to raise the profile of the thousands of professionals and volunteers who already work tirelessly to enrich our area and support those who need it most. You can find out more here:

<https://www.3sg.org.uk/pages/compassionate-communities>

As the Chair and Vice Chair of your Forum, we meet quarterly with other Forum Chairs and Vice Chairs. These meetings are chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by the BANES 3SG and the Chair of BANES ALCA (Avon Local Councils Association) which represents the parishes. This ensures that the issues you raise are fed back and common themes and trends can be explored further.

Issues discussed at the Forums are also regularly taken forward at the Parish Liaison meeting which is held three times a year and supports parishes and their clerks in working more closely with Bath & North East Somerset Council and with each other. The BANES Rural Transport Group, which had its roots in a Somer Valley Forum meeting, is a good example of this.

If there are topics you would like to see discussed at a Forum meeting, you have an idea for a theme, or know an organisation that would like to take part in a Community Showcase, please do let us know. This is your Forum and we want to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

Lynda Robertson (Chair) and Karen Walker (Vice Chair)

A review of the year 2019-20

There are usually four Forum meetings per year but due to local and national elections and pre-election periods during 2019, we had fewer meetings than usual. We are looking forward to a fuller programme in 2020-21.

30th January 2019 (AGM)

At the 2019 AGM, the Forum welcomed Peasedown St John Residents' Association as new members of the Forum. The AGM took place in Swallow Community Café in Radstock which provided welcome refreshments on what was a very chilly evening. The Forum heard from David Norris, Planning Director of Origin3 which is working with Radstock Co-operative on the redevelopment plans for their Radstock store. The Forum also received an update on the Local Government Boundary Commission's Ward Boundary Review which came into effect on 2nd May 2019. Forum members were also given details of how to respond to the consultation on the West of England Combined Authority Joint Local Transport Plan.

24th September 2019

The main theme of the meeting was Young People and the Police also presented on the role of the Peasedown St John Mini-Police, which was very well received. The Forum was hosted by Swallow at their Community Café in Radstock and members were welcomed by service user Sarah and Chief Executive, Bev Craney, who explained how Swallow Charity supports young people with learning disabilities. The Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Partnership also explained more about their services and Off the Record presented on their work with young people in the Somer Valley.

The Forum welcomed the Leader of the Council, Cllr Dine Romero, who presented on the Council's priorities. The Forum also received an update from Cllr David Orme on the work of the BANES Rural Transport Group.

Information was made available about forthcoming Council consultations on the Care and Support Charging and Financial Framework; Local Council Support Scheme and the Bath Clean Air Zone. Advice was given on how to take part in the Big Community Clean-up Litter Pick as well as how to nominate individuals and organisations for the Council's Annual Community Awards.

The Police gave their regular update and the Forum also welcomed Avon Fire and Rescue for the first time to give an overview of their work in the area.

Wednesday 22nd January 2020

This was a special meeting of the Somer Valley Forum devoted to the Council's Budget and Corporate Strategy. The Forum heard from Cllr Dine Romero - Leader of the Council; Cllr Richard Samuel - Cabinet Member for Resources and Will Godfrey - Chief Executive. The evening was very informative with many interesting questions from the floor. These have helped to inform the papers for Cabinet and Council taking place in February 2020.

Somer Valley Forum contacts:

*Sara Dixon, Locality Manager, B&NES Council. E-mail: sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk
Alison Wells, Community Engagement Officer, B&NES Council. E-mail alison_wells@bathnes.gov.uk*