Parish Report May 23

I am pleased to say that we are now one Council. I am not pleased to say that at the time of writing I can find no figures for the outcome of 22/23 year. According to the report of the Executive minutes for 15th March the forecast overspend for 22/23 was 23.1 million and that the statutory deadline for outturn submission is the end of May, but with the potential for an extension. So basically don’t hold your breath.

My time recently has been spent on individual Casework for the division. This is confidential work but the amount of this has increased considerably since the advent of the New Council. This is not surprising because we had potentially 5 councillors covering the patch now we have two. I am pleased to say that Cllr Davies is now willing to cover Parishes on an every-other-session basis, which according to my reckoning means that I am due in Williton this month, with confusion about Watchet/Stogursey because they are on the same evening owing to the Bank Holiday. I intended to come to Watchet leaving Stogursey with Cllr Davies because he was with Watchet in April. I have had no feed back on this.

I understand that I may have been misrepresented at the last Watchet Parish Council meeting but I am waiting for the recording of the meeting to find out if this is the case. I am happy for 20 mile per hour limits to be imposed but in the case of Watchet because of the lack of traffic there is not the problem there was. I do not think that any 20 mile per hour limits should be funded by the Parishes because this was a major commitment from the Liberal Democrats when they stood for election in 2022.

I attended a meeting about the Local Community Networks on 18thApril and some of the ways these could work was outlined. The County would like to hear about what priorities each area would like, and hoped we would consider these, items like roads, tourism, education, NHS, and the Council Plan could be considered in each area. It was indicated that we would be allocated an officer to be shared between two areas which would meet about 6 times a year.

Unfortunately the issue of the Coast Road B3191 has implications beyond Watchet. I understand that the Exmoor Coaster now starts from Minehead and will not be going around Doniford/Watchet. Also the lack of the B3191 has impacted on the B3190 which is taking more traffic than when the coastal part of the B3191 was open. This has been drawn to my attention and the increased traffic between Tropicaria and Five Bells is concerning, with the bank on this stretch becoming very fragile with heavy good vehicles not taking enough care when passing each other. I have asked the County if we can have some traffic calming measure on this stretch, whether this be traffic lights or priority indications. This has been asked for in the past but there is more need now.

I have also had three training sessions on planning so that I can be up and running for my role on the planning committee. Planning is quite complex and has changed since my time on West Somerset Council.

If you have any questions on this report, please email me with them.

Cllr Rosemary Woods, Watchet and Stogursey Division, Somerset Council. 1st May 2023.