

## Wiltshire Council

### Points for discussion with Parish Councils in December

1. **The Cabinet meeting on November October 17<sup>th</sup>** dealt with the following agenda items:
  - a. **Monitoring the Quarter Two Revenue and Capital Budgets, Corporate Performance and Risk**
  - b. **Strategic Operational Depot Strategy** <sup>1</sup>
  - c. **An Integrated Care Board Community Health Contract** <sup>2</sup>
  - d. **A350 Chippenham Bypass (Phases 4 & 5)**
  - e. **Waste Services Delivery Plan**

I had put a question regarding food waste that was dealt with as if it were related to item e (turn to Appendix 1 if you want to see the question and the reply, that are in the public domain) but as items d and e dealt with specific contractual commitments and were discussed 'in camera' I'm unable to report on them further in any detail.

Suffice it to say that **I shall be continuing my pursuit of the Council's environmentally damaging and excessively costly handling of food waste.**

2. **The South West Area Board meeting held in East Knoyle on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>** was largely focused on Highways matters. It was very well attended.

There was

- a. a presentation made jointly by **Caroline Thomas**, the Cabinet Member for Highways, **Samantha Howell**, Director of Highways and **Dave Thomas**, Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning, and
- b. a presentation by **John Derryman**, Head of Strategy, Performance and Oversight, Office the Police and Crime Commissioner.

I am circulating both presentations in pdf with this note.

Derryman argued, in summary, that there has been a significant improvement in enforcement. He particularly wanted to thank all the Parish Councils with Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) who are downloading their data and sharing it with his office and stressed that Wiltshire's is the first police force to accept and use this data as evidence of speeding. **He all PCs to download SID data and share it with his office.**

The Thomas/Howell/Thomas presentation described the background and the funding streams available for highways maintenance and improvements and stressed that more funding is now becoming available to upgrade and improve the road network.

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<sup>1</sup> approved "a capital budget of £37.928m for delivery of a new central area strategic depot at Melksham, while ensuring all remaining depots remain compliant, funded by £1.870m Capital Receipts and £36.058m borrowing."

<sup>2</sup> Gve "'in principle' agreement to commit Better Care Funding to the ICB Community Health Contract from 2025 to 2032 (with potential for a further 2 years to 2034)."

The lengthy Q&A session was devoted to questions submitted previously and was dominated by issues related to speeding on the major roads, especially the A350.

One question, however, related to the roads from Gutch Common to Semley and Shaftesbury, provided me with an opportunity to remark on the appalling state of the C roads throughout the South West area and specifically through the Donheads, attested to - in addition to numerous resident comments - by data supplied to me by Dave Thomas himself.

This prompted an admission from Samantha Howell that the council's policy had been to focus on A & B roads, to acknowledge the scale of the issue, and to confirm that it will now be responded to. The data Thomas supplied me in the form of a chart, and my follow-up email are at Appendix 2

The Area Board's grants budget for 2023/24 is now largely depleted. The LHFIG budget is all spent; any new application for funding will have to wait till the new financial year. Aid was granted for the Fonthill Gifford Village Hut and for the Hinton Hall east window replacement.

3. **River Nadder, water quality etc.** There is nothing specific that I can share with you at this time, but I have been involved as chair in a valuable dialogue between organisations representing angling associations & river quality/citizen science activists and the Environment Agency/Natural England.

## Agenda Item 5

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**14 November 2023**

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**Agenda Item 16 – Waste Services Delivery Plan**

**Question from Cllr Richard Budden, Tisbury Division**

**To Cllr Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**

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**Question (23-92)**

Preamble

At the Council meeting on 17 October 2023, during discussion of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency, I pointed out that Wiltshire's performance in recycling 40% of household waste is particularly disappointing since it had gone down from the previous year when (according to data collected by the Local Government Association) Wiltshire was placed only 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 149 single-tier councils.

What made this performance even worse is that it was accompanied by an increase in the burning of household waste, up from 39% of the total to 44%.

I pointed out that councils achieving far higher recycling rates (a large number well over 50%, and over 60% in a couple of cases) were almost all carrying out separate collection of food waste for composting rather than burning.

In his response, Cllr Holder made plain that Wiltshire Council had no plans to introduce separate collection of food waste, even though this was likely to become mandatory under new regulations anticipated to be introduced shortly.

On Friday of the same week Defra announced it intends to introduce rules requiring waste collection authorities - such as Wiltshire Council - to arrange, by the end of March 2026, for weekly collection of food waste for recycling or composting. Since then, Defra has been using social media to publicise its plan to introduce separate food waste collections for everybody as part of a 'simpler recycling' initiative.

The Defra announcement does make provision to treat local authorities with long-term contracts for 'energy from waste' as exceptions, but makes plain that, as such, they are undesirable.

The Defra statement also included the announcement of amendments to existing regulations for producer responsibility for packaging. These should lead to the Council receiving its share of £900 million of income from producers that Defra expects to distribute to local authorities to cover costs associated with the recycling of packaging waste.

Question

In light of what we know (and, indeed, always knew) concerning the detrimental effect of depleting the environment by burning food waste instead of composting it, plus the climate change impact of the greenhouse gases emitted, and following Defra's announcements on Friday 21 October 2023, would Cllr Holder now agree with me that

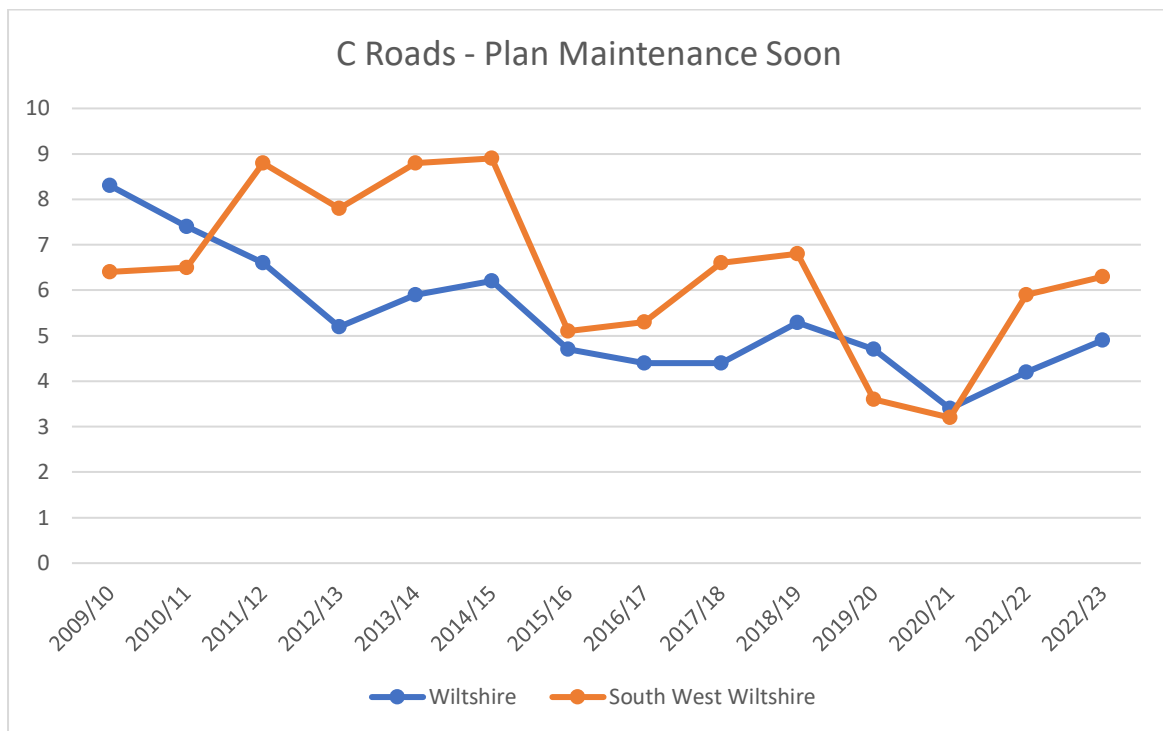
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the decision a decade ago to contract with Hills for a term fixed until 2038 for a plant to process food waste prior to burning was unwise?

**Response**

No. The contract let was appropriate for Wiltshire's circumstances at the time of tender.

## APPENDIX 2



Budden, Richard

To: Howell, Samantha

Cc: Thomas, Dave; Thomas, Caroline; Roger Brake; Simon Barkham; woodmanpub@aol.com; John Feltham

You forwarded this message on 01/12/2023 15:25.

Thank you, Samantha - and thanks also by copy to Councillor Thomas and Dave Thomas - for coming to the South West Area Board yesterday evening.

The question regarding the road through Gutch Common raised the key issue that is typical of many others in the Donheads, and throughout the South West.

As you know there are more C roads in the South West Area than in any other area, they are in worse condition than in the rest of the county, and, on objective data, have been so in ten years out of the last fourteen.

I'm grateful to you for acknowledging that this is the result of a policy focus on A and B class roads, but would argue that this amounts to a grave policy of neglect.

The roads through the Donheads are a particular case because they deteriorate more rapidly as a result of the underlying geology and the topography.

I shall collect my thoughts, together with the Parish Councils and those present from the Donheads yesterday evening, and give Dave a call early next week to see how we may take the conversation forward.

With best regards

Dick Budden

Councillor Richard Budden

Wiltshire Council

E: [Richard.budden@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.budden@wiltshire.gov.uk) T: 07944 640 900