Jenny Kenton District Council report July 2022

There are now 8 months before the Unitary Council will take over the functions delegated to South Somerset District Council but the most important for the parish Council will be planning, which currently still sits within Martin and my responsibilities. As you know any controversial planning application that either the parish Council or several members of the public object to come to Martin and I for either decision or to recommend it to Area West (which is local to our area).

South Somerset is currently the only one of the four District Councils that have their planning heard at a local level and moving forward to Unitary we are not sure how this will be dealt with. We might be lucky that the Unitary decides to have four area committees, but this will mean that the whole of South Somerset will be heard together, most likely in Yeovil. But it might be that we have one planning committee for the whole of Somerset and only the really difficult planning applications find their way to it…..we will have to wait and see but you can be assured that all SSDC members want to keep their area system.

With regard to Area West we still have a delegated authority to hold virtual meetings of some committees, this will end on July 31st (unless extended at full Council this month). Currently all planning applications which are referred to our area committees are heard remotely so it does give members of the public and parish Councils a chance to have their say without travelling to Chard. I would urge all members to attend if they can if there is an application in this parish and they want to represent their residents. You must register to speak virtually by emailing democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk before 9am of the day before the meeting. The meetings are generally heard on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and agendas can be found online or you can ask either Martin or myself if you think an application is coming that you are interested in.

As you probably already know the section 19 flood report is now completed and you can access the whole report online by visiting the most recent area West meeting agenda for 15th June 2022, this will also be available at [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk).

There was a leisure report that went to the executive of the District Council this week that included some information about the use of our new leisure centre, income is above the target set by about £80k and the centre has 1756 members, it holds 46 fitness classes and employs 67 local people. Both Martin and I have been on the board since its inception and the only option was a supermarket and one of your County Councillors Jason has been the portfolio holder for its delivery, although it was risk when we decided to develop the site ourselves I think it was an opportunity that would now not take place due to financial constraints. There is still much work to be done but I think we can be proud of the facility as a Council and hopefully there will be more to come in the next few years within the site.