

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Chard and Blackdowns

Date: Wednesday, 2 August 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.20 pm

Location: Corfe Village Hall, Newton Road, Corfe TA3 7AQ

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Jason Baker	Somerset Council
Ross Henley	Somerset Council
Jenny Kenton	Somerset Council
Sarah Wakefield	Somerset Council
Martin Wale	Somerset Council
Charlie Field	Otterford Parish Council
Colin Fisher	Stoke St Mary Parish Council
Roger Neale	Pitminster Parish Council
Mark Palmer	Neroche Grouped Council
Neal Parsons	Buckland St Mary Parish Council
Keith Read	West Hatch Parish Council
John Harrison	Corfe Parish Council
Sgt George Flynn	Avon & Somerset Police

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Nathan Turnbull	Somerset Council
Claire Thackray	Somerset Council
Alyn Jones	Somerset Council

Kate Hellard
Angela Cox
Ally Laing
Tom Parkinson
Emily Window
Sam Crossman

Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:

Representing

Val Keitch

Caroline Matthews
Sue Hayman
Richard Tyzack (Clerk)
Sarah Fisher (Clerk)
Russ Wardell
Les Matthey
Spud Middleton

Associate Lead Member for Localities
(LCNs) & Public Health
Avon & Somerset Police
Neroche PC
Pitminster PC
Stoke St Mary PC
Tatworth & Forton PC
Tatworth & Forton PC
West Hatch PC

Virtual attendees:

Name:

Representing

Ann Dimond
Andy Grant
Claire Brown
David Peak
Tim Youngs

Somerset Council
Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council
Tatworth & Forton Parish Council
Tatworth & Forton Parish Council
Blackdown Hills AONB

Apologies:

Name:

Representing

Connor Payne
Peter Cordier
A representative

Somerset Council
Pitminster Parish Council
Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Action by: item:

Item 1: To Elect the Chair of the Local Community Network

It was proposed by Councillor Sarah Wakefield and seconded by Colin Fisher (Stoke St Mary Parish Council) that Keith Read (West Hatch Parish Council) be elected as Chair of the Chard and Blackdowns Local Community Network.

There being no other proposals it was:

Resolved:

That Keith Read (West Hatch Parish Council) be elected as Chair of the Chard and Blackdowns Local Community Network for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Item 2: To Appoint the Vice Chair of the Local Community Network

It was proposed by Councillor Ross Henley (Somerset Council) and seconded by Charlie Field (Otterford Parish Council) that Councillor Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council) be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Chard and Blackdowns Local Community Network.

There being no other proposals, it was:

Resolved:

That Councillor Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council) be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Chard and Blackdowns Local Community Network for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Item 3: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Connor Payne (Somerset Council), Peter Cordier (Chair of Pitminster

Parish Council) and the representative of Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council.

Item 4: **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 5: **Public Question Time**

There were no questions raised during public question time.

Item 6: **To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the Local Community Network for the next 12 months**

The Service Manager for the LCN's advised that there were 18 LCN areas across the county and two thirds of their first meetings had taken place. She provided a short power point presentation (slides attached) on the purpose of the LCNs and how they would be supported.

There then followed a round table discussion on the topics important to local residents and what could be done to resolve or improve the issues identified. The following points were raised:

- The role and involvement of the LCNs in Strategic Planning at Somerset Council. Their role in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA), Community Planning and the new Local Plan.
- Access to medical care such as doctors, dentists and mental health services. The police spend time on people with mental health issues when this is not their area of responsibility.
- Antisocial behaviour.
- The lack of bus routes in Chard and the surrounding villages. The example of Hatch Beauchamp PC who had pump-primed their own service was mentioned and also the possible use of mini-buses rather than 53 seat coaches.
- The general state of the highways and roads in the area. Their drainage, support and infrastructure together with poor feedback to issues raised with the County Highway team. Also some speed limits were no longer appropriate for the roads. Roads often widened by large tractors using them.
- Conservation including flooding was not just limited to the Levels. An expert at County level was needed to give advice on flooding issues and solutions. .
- The LCNs could help to reach out to other groups to understand the nature around them.

The Chairman then summarised the main points as:

- Planning and development around Chard and Taunton Racecourse

- with no development south of the M5 motorway. LCN input.
- Lack of provision of healthcare and how could the LCN help to resolve this.
- The provision of buses and public transport. Park and ride was not always the solution. The state of local roads and speeding traffic.
- Nature and recovery.
- Conservation and flooding.

During discussion the following points were made:-:

- Need to involve the farming network
- Problems with National Highways' A358 Development Plans
- Connectivity of rural broadband
- Access to officers at Somerset Council with the suggestion of a directory of contacts for services.

At the conclusion of the feedback session, the Service Manager for the LCNs confirmed that all the comments would be collated and would inform the debate at the next meeting.

The Chair suggested that LCN members work in small groups with officers and look for funding in partnership with other local groups.

Other priorities, which were captured on flipchart paper included:

Group 1:

- Planning, Development
- Cemetery (TFPC)
- Speeding (Minor roads)
- Conservation – AONB engagement
- Highways A358 / M5
- Superfast Fibre Optic
- Flooding

LCN work groups and County experts on each 'issue'.

Group 2:

- Access to medical care – GPs, Dentists, Mental Health, Community Care (Isolation and loneliness)
- Improve communication with SC -directory + contacts.
- Supporting youth provision
- Anti-social behaviour
- Housing developments – pressure on infrastructure
- Inter-community transport

Group 3:

- Reopen Wellington train station
- Bus routes – mini-bus rather than 53 seaters
- Broadband – form sub-group to work together

- A358 – new road – support bypass for Henlade and strong concerns about A358 from rural parishes.
- Social Housing
- Eastern Relief Road – re-look at plan
- Highways – close working relationship and point of contact.
- Re-develop buildings / finish regeneration in Chard
- Localities Team – experienced within area
- Schools and Youth Clubs
- U3A
- Community involvement / non-English speaking.
- Sport groups
- Young Farmers / workers / families
- Dentists, Doctors etc

FUNDING

Group 4:

Environment:

- A358
- Fly Tipping
- Blackdown AONB expansion
- SC support for local projects
- Planning enforcement
- Homes for local residents
- Local biodigester
- Recycling van 'debris'

Comms:

Fibre to the property

Airband

Roads:

Speeding including agricultural vehicle size

Delay – Black top and supporting drainage

Rights of Way:

Lack of support for adds and subtracts

Group 5:

- A358 – issues with local villages
- Strategic Planning – Role of L\CN include Local Plan Review
- Local roads (condition) 20mph?
- Childrens playgrounds maintenance
- Fly tipping
- Extend AONB to include Vale
- Flooding
- Nexus 25
- Rural isolation

Who to involve:

Highways England and Somerset Highways
Environment Agency
Farming Network

Item 7: **To agree the frequency of meetings**

The Service Manager for the LCN's advised that it was anticipated to schedule the LCN meetings every two months with the next to be held in late October/November. There could be working group meeting held in between these dates as an effective way of information gathering on a particular issue.

In response to a question on the appointment of LCN Link Managers, the Executive Director for Strategy Workforce & Localities advised that the Council were redeploying resources within its current financial constraints although there was a small amount of reserve funding.

Councillor Val Keitch, as Associate Lead Member for Localities (LCNs) & Public Health thanked all for attending and said she was confident the LCNs would work but may take time to bed in. She thanked all the staff for their attendance.

The Chairs also thanked all for attending and asked that people keep involved and let their villages and Parish Councils know about the discussion.

Item 8: **The schedule of meetings for the next 12 months**

The schedule of LCN meetings for the next 12 months will be circulated as soon as the dates and venues are confirmed.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcn@somerset.gov.uk