

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - South East Somerset (Wincanton)

Date: Thursday, 22 February 2024

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.40 pm

Location: Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall, Shalford Lane, Charlton Musgrove, Wincanton
BA9 8HF

Chaired by: Ewan Jones and Judi Morison

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Councillor Tom Power	Somerset Council
Councillor Kevin Messenger	Somerset Council
Dominic Savage	Abbas & Templecombe PC
Tina Chapman	Abbas & Templecombe PC
Ewan Jones (Joint Chair)	Bruton TC
Judi Morison (Joint Chair)	Castle Cary TC
Lisa Davis	Castle Cary TC (Clerk)
Lisa Biddlescombe	Castle Cary TC
Kevin Horne	Cary Moor PC
Robin Bastable	Charlton Musgrove PC
Ian Tibbitt	Compton Pauncefoot PM
Lynne Hughes	Ditchheat PC

Pam Griffiths	Ditchheat PC
Ken Courtenay	Henstridge PC
Kevin Sherrard	Lamyatt PM
Jim Frampton	Lydford on Fosse PC
Margaret Capon	Milborne Port PC
Andy Keys-Toyer	North Cadbury PC
Ian Steadman	Pen Selwood PC
Richard Waller	Pitcombe PC
Mark Hutton	Pitcombe PC
Brian Norman	Queen Camel PC
Richard Squires	Sparkford PC
Maureen Robinson	Stoke Trister with Bayford PC
Howard Ellard	Wincanton PC

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Terena Isaacs, LCN Link Officer	Somerset Council
Tim Cook, Locality Manager	Somerset Council
Jo Boucher	Somerset Council
Kate Hellard, LCN Service Manager (<i>Virtual</i>)	Somerset Council
Bel Deering (<i>Virtual</i>)	Somerset Council
Kirsty Larkins, Service Director Climate & Sustainability	Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Sue Place, Connect Area Champion	Balsam Centre
Councillor Richard Wilkins	Somerset Council
Councillor Dixie Darch	Somerset Council

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Councillor Lucy Trimnell	Somerset Council
Chris Edwards	Ansford PC
Cherry Toop	Queen Camel PC
John Brendon	Queen Camel PC
Norman Purcell	Lydford on Fosse PC
Lewis	Unknown
Simon Hoar	Babcary PC
Tim Archer	Charlton Horethorne PC
Simon Pritchard	Milborne Port PC

Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Councillor Nicola Clark	Somerset Council
Councillor Claire Sully	Somerset Council
Mareike Beyer	North Cadbury PC
Julia Hunter	Shepton Montague PC
Ken Flood	Sparkford PC

Tim Carty

Milborne Port PC

Paul Chadwick

Lamyatt PM

Amanda Ware

Avon & Somerset Police

Barry Taylor

Rural Practice Network Care Coordinator

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 28: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Nicola Clark, Councillor Claire Sully, Mareike Beyer of North Cadbury PC, Julia Hunter of Shepton Montague PC, Ken Flood of Sparkford PC, Tim Carty of Milborne Port PC, Paul Chadwick of Lamyatt PM, Amanda Ware of Avon & Somerset Police and Barry Taylor Rural Practice Network Care Coordinator.

Item 29: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by the Somerset Councillors present at the meeting.

Item 30: Notes from the Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 6th December 2023 were approved as a correct record of those present.

Item 31: Public Question Time

In response to frustration and disappointment raised regarding the withdrawal of Section 106 funding in particular schemes within Castle Cary, Judi Morison explained the history and withdrawal of certain funding and the knock-on effect this has had on the of local facilities within the Castle Cary and Ansford area. She echoed the comments and frustrations raised.

Ewan Jones explained to the meeting that he had received an email from 'Visit Somerset' who were looking for support for an

application to the 'local visitor economy partnership'. He recommended that a letter of support be written on behalf of the South East Somerset LCN to help support their bid and reiterate the importance of tourist economy in this area, he confirmed there was no financial support required. Following a short discussion everyone agreed to his request and that a letter be sent on behalf of the South East Somerset LCN.

Item 32: **Recycling Centre Closures Update**

The Chairman introduced Cllr Dixie Darch (Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change) and Kirsty Larkins Service Director for Climate and Sustainability who provided an update and progress report on the potential savings of recycling centres. Some of their comments included:

- Confirmed that a petition had been received at the Full Council meeting regarding Dimmer Recycling Centre and that all members were fully aware of local people valuing their recycling centres.
- Appreciated concerns already raised by the people of Somerset, however due to the financial emergency cost savings are needed to be made from the Waste budget.
- Somerset currently have 16 recycling sites, in comparison to other South West councils this is a high ratio to households even if a further 5 centres were to close.
- Commercial negotiations were underway with the current contractors, however until these are complete we are still in a state of 'limbo'.
- Once all negotiations are completed a full public engagement consultation will be carried out before any final decisions are made. It is hoped there will be more clarity in the next few weeks.

During a question and answer type session, Cllr Dixie Darch and Kirsty Larkins provided some responses to points of detail. A summary of some of the points and responses are provided below:

- Impact any closures will have on the potential increase in flooding due to additional fly tipping?

Built into the saving would be additional funding to support any increase in fly tipping in the area and any

enforcement that would be necessary to deter this from happening.

- Have any calculations been done round the running of the centres, increase in clearing of fly tipping and what about increase in kerbside collections?

Different contractors manage the kerbside collections, and that further work and consultation needs to be done to ensure better solutions going forward.

Cannot determine how much fly tipping will be caused by any possible closures but have historical information from previous closures which we are basing assumptions on, however appreciate this is not perfect. Experience shows that main culprits of fly tipping is mainly from rogue traders and not necessarily everyday homeowners.

- Could everyone pay a small fee to use the recycling centres?

Unfortunately, legislation does not legally allow us to do this.

- Can we go to recycling centres in other counties?

You would need to check with the appropriate Council whether there is any cross residents' scheme in place.

- What is the timescale of consultation?

Hoping early summer but need to ensure any consultation is right and meaningful. Looking at a six-week window with pop up events taking place around the county.

- Can the charge on garden waste collections be increased?

Yes, this can be looked at in the future along with the whole kerbside recycling.

- Do you have figures and statistics of what gets recycled at these centres?

Yes, do have this information, which is very useful, however it is worth noting the increase in items now permitted to be collected within the weekly kerbside collections, for example small electrical items and batteries.

- Do you have any plans to enlarge other recycling centres, as there are already huge queues at these centres and the potential closures will only exacerbate this?

There are no plans to enlarge centres, however cameras are installed in many centres to help aid the public to see for themselves current activity.

- Are other authorities looking to close recycling centres across the country?

Yes, around a third of authorities are looking to close centres.

- Recycling is one of the most environmentally friendly things we can do, so fundamentally a thing to be encouraged?

Totally agree and that we also need to ensure we look to re use and reduce consumption in order to help reduce the overall costs of recycling.

- What is the figure you are looking to save?

Looking to save £1 million on the contract, and within other areas we are working incredibly hard to reduce the impact by other means. The contract is due to run until 2031.

Cllr Dixie Darch (Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change) and Kirsty Larkins, Service Director for Climate and

Sustainability thanked everyone for their extremely valuable comments as they acknowledged this was a very emotive issue.

Item 33: **Updates from working groups**

Flooding

Ewan Jones provided an update on the flooding working group and reported on the two workshops that had taken place. He said another one would take place in a couple months in Bruton with the Civil Contingencies Team available to help support and advise.

During discussion several concerns and frustrations were voiced regarding the lack of 24-hour emergency response and accessible reporting mechanisms available from Somerset Highways, along with support from relevant other authorities regards emergency flooding and the clearing of gullies. Parishes felt more was required from supporting networks such as the Environment Agency, LLFA and the Council to help ensure any issues were quickly and correctly addressed and directed to the appropriate contact.

Ewan Jones was disappointed to hear these concerns and was happy to take contact details and liaise with relevant parishes after the meeting, as he had not personally encountered these problems.

Bel Deering representative from Community Engagement and Local River Authority acknowledged concerns raised, and although they did not have the technical expertise, she offered support to parishes to help provide and direct parishes to the correct people. She could also help put together any concerns and assist with those parishes working on emergency plans.

Her email should anyone wish to make contact:

Bel.deering@somerset.gov.uk

Kate Hellard, LCN Service Manager acknowledged the comments raised and suggested it was a good opportunity for the Highways working group to address these issues.

Tim Cook, Localities Manager, explained that fundamentally reporting around emergency planning had not changed since

LGR and the new Somerset Council. He explained the process and emergency services involved and appreciated there may have been some communication problems due to limited resources but that there has always been a continuous 24-hour emergency helpline. He was disappointed to hear this and welcomed parishes to make contact should they encounter these problems again.

Ewan Jones appreciated the comments made and concluded that there were lessons to be learnt. He believed this was an opportunity for communities to look at what we could do ourselves in the future, to be prepared for these events and work with the appropriate parties to ensure this happens.

Councillor Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport and Digital also acknowledged the concerns raised. He said the lack of response was unacceptable and would look into this issue further but explained that due to the current financial emergency and the bulk of funding being allocated for children and social services the highways budget was very small in comparison.

Highways

Terena Isaacs provided an update on the Highways working group, this included:

- Success of the initial meeting in January which had been well attended with information given regarding the 'Highway Steward' scheme.
- Next steps in setting up a sub group comprising of 6 members which have been agreed, with objectives going forward of quarterly meetings with Highways to help look and prioritise what parishes want.

During discussion several comments were raised on issues regarding community speed watch schemes and the harassment some volunteers had faced. They also spoke about the difficulties and lack of support from both the police and highways authority regarding the possibility of automated speed devices and any data this would provide.

Some parishes welcome the support of their local PCSO and advised parishes to contact the police should they have issues regarding harassment of the local people carrying out these

speed surveys.

Kate Hellard, LCN Service Manager felt this was a good discussion topic for future highways working group and that an action should be taken forward to help facilitate parishes to connect with the appropriate community inspector for their area. She asked that the contact details of the six representatives of the working sub group be shared with the parishes to help provide contact details for anyone requiring more help and support on the issues raised.

ACTION: LCN team –to circulate contact details of the representative of the highways sub working group and help parishes connect with the appropriate Community Police Inspector for their area.

Contact for the LCN team –
southeastlcn@somerset.gov.uk

Footpaths

Terena Isaacs provided an update on the Footpaths working group, this included:

- Explained a recent meeting had been shown the online mapping system and you tube video that she would share with the notes of this meeting where people can plot faults and track progress.
- Discussed the way forward of the working group and sought clarification on the frequency of meetings required.

ACTION: LCN team –to circulate details of the online mapping system and reporting tools with the notes of the meeting.

Contact for the LCN team –
southeastlcn@somerset.gov.uk

In response to questions raised regarding the responsibility of emptying of gullies, Councillor Richard Wilkins confirmed the Council have a statutory duty to do this. He explained that any additional enhanced works would be at an extra cost and would need to be paid for by the parishes in the future. He referred to

the success of the recent pilot 'Highway Steward Scheme' and that parishes would need to buy into this. He could not provide any further details at this stage but could confirm that works would not be reduced for 2024/25 but would be reduced in 2025/26. He voiced his frustrations that this was the case, but was the result of the current financial situation and challenges that the Council unfortunately find themselves in.

In response to concerns regarding HGV's and the current weight restrictions of lorries at Queen Camel bridge, Councillor Richard Wilkins noted the concern and would look to progress this further with Highways. His email should anyone wish to contact him was Richard.wilkins@somerset.gov.uk

During further discussion it was suggested that going forward a 'programme of works' be submitted to the working groups to provide parishes with an idea of what works were ongoing in their areas. They believed this would help these working groups get access to the correct officers and provide direct answers to any ongoing issues. Tim Cook acknowledged this request and would look to take this forward as a future action for the LCN team.

Concerns were raised regarding the roles of the parish councils in maintaining the network of public rights of way. Much of the land is privately owned and therefore clarification was sought on the liability and responsibilities of any issues that should occur such as personal injury and broken fences/gates etc. Who should be contacted? as don't often know who the landowner is and although parishes were doing their best, this was restricted and therefore was a need to address this and find an efficient way of dealing with the issues in the future.

Terena Isaacs noted these concerns and would look to circulate further information and contact details to all parish councils. She noted Eve Wynn could help.

Item 34: **Discussion - What can we do/want to do locally regarding**

service devolution

During discussion several comments were raised, including:

- Assumption that Parish Council's would take on the work with little or no financial support or idea of what they would be taking on.
- There is a need to wait until Somerset Council can provide a definitive list to Parish Councils with what they can and can't do going forward. Need to slow down before any commitment is made.
- There are many avenues of support required when providing these services and therefore there is a need have a much better understanding of the support services required such as legal and financial support, so that Parish Councils can be in a much better position before any commitment can be given going forward.
- It needs to be acknowledged that the size of parishes varies greatly and therefore the financial capacity and ability to act on these requirements will be very tight for many Parish councils particularly Parish meetings.

Councillor Richard Wilkins, Officers and the Chairman noted these concerns and appreciated further work was needed before any final decisions would be made. It was hoped the role of the working groups going forward would help support and tackle these issues but acknowledged this would take time. The Chairman wished to thank everyone for their valuable comments which would be taken forward.

Item 35: **Planning for Future meetings**

Judi Morison presented the item and invited requests on the future topics of LCN meetings going forward. She noted that Health and Well Being had already been requested along with the possibilities of revisiting Holistic Health for both younger and older residents.

Other topics raised were regarding the planning service, in particular phosphates mitigation and enforcement issues. Judi Morison explained that unfortunately planning matters were not in the brief of the LCN but would note these concerns and gave assurance these would be taken back to the Planning service to see how they can be progressed.

ACTION: LCN team –to contact the Planning service to address concerns raised regarding the impact of phosphate mitigation and procedures around planning enforcement.

Contact for the LCN team –
southeastlcn@somerset.gov.uk

Item 36: **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting of the South East Somerset LCN is schedule for 18th April 2024 at Queen Camel Village Hall.

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