

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Wells and Rural

Date: Thursday, 1 February 2024

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Tony Hathway (LCN Vice Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:

Representing:

Councillor Heather Shearer

Somerset Council

Councillor Ros Wyke

Somerset Council

Councillor Tony Robins

Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Councillor Philip Welch

Wells City Council

Scott McMillan

Volunteer Network

David Lewsey

Shalford House, Dinder

Mair Lewsey

Shalford House, Dinder

Councillor Jacqui Zorab

Chair, St Cuthbert Out

Councillor Jim Reeves

St Cuthbert Out Parish

Richard Evans

Godney Parish Council

Maggie Charlesworth

The Lawrence Centre

Ulrike Naumann

The Lawrence Centre

Councillor Simon Shimmin

North Wootton

Councillor Martin Cooke

St Cuthbert Out Parish

Sue Isherwood

Westbury Sub Mendip

Lisa Pool

Clerk, St Cuthbert Out Parish

Virtual attendees:

Councillor John Bowskill

Wookey Parish

Bella Lapwood

Jason Wyatt

Jessica Lewin

Jim Hardcastle

Gail Norris

Joanna Davey

Councillor Philip Blatchford

Siobhan White

Bella Lapwood

Tom Parkinson

Avon & Somerset Police

The Filo Project

Emborough Parish Council

Officer Attendance:

Kate Hellard

Terena Isaacs

Debbie Widdows

Adrian Moore

Nivil LonaKutty

Somerset Council

Somerset Council

Somerset Council

Somerset Council

Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 28: To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Edric Hobbs.

Councillor Theo Butt Philip attending another meeting.

Item 29: Declarations of Interest

There were none.

Item 30: Approve the minutes of the last Meeting

The following changes were proposed:

The notes need amending to include:

- Item 1 - add Tony Hathway as in attendance
- Item 25c – to be removed
- Item 26:
 - action for parishes, city, and town councils to work together regarding devolution.
 - action for Parishes, city, and town councils to consider warm hubs for their communities.

The amended notes from the previous meeting held on 16 November 2023 were proposed by Cllr Martin Cooke and seconded by Cllr Heather Shearer.

Item 31: **Public Questions (not covered on the agenda)**

SC Cllr Ros Wyke Highlighted one of the casualties due to financial pressure is cultural funding. She spoke about *Take Art* which was suggested could be discussed at a future meeting and she was not sure if they will have a sustainable grant funding in the future.

Cllr Martin Cooke from St Cuthberts Out Parish asked:

Would the Astronomy Group which met in Wells Museum continue? The legacy council used to own the telescope. Could this be discussed on another agenda? She mentioned that it seemed as if the telescope was not working.

SC Cllr Ros Wyke affirmed that she had responsibility for assets and would undertake to find out whether the telescope at the Mendip Hills Charterhouse Centre was working as she was not aware that it was not working.

Crime figures were queried, notably Draycott.

PCSO Jason Wyatt, Avon & Somerset Police, said crime figures for each area were online. They were current and up to date and on the [Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](http://www.police.uk) website. He informed everyone that they merely needed to insert their postcode. He pointed out that they were not week specific but monthly figures which were one month behind. For example, December's figures were available in January, January's figures were available in February etc.

He further pointed out that the LCN maps did not match up with the police boundary lines and provided a map of the policing boundary lines stating that W was for Wells and S was for Shepton and that Draycott fell under the Cheddar area. (See attached map).

PCSO Wyatt mentioned that it was difficult to run figures for one area for one LCN because of the boundary lines.

He further pointed out that the agenda item was too vague for him to give a presentation. Shepton Mallet crimes were different to Wells crime and if he gave a presentation he needed the request to be more specific for any kind of meaningful presentation.

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Flooding

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David Lewsey from Shalford House, Dinder queried the compensation causes for victims who were severely affected by flooding. There are strong rumours and questions regarding the compensation and the actual cause of the flooding.

Lisa Pool suggested that Gill Pettit, Priddy Parish Clerk, maybe able to assist with this information.

Cllr Heather Shearer mentioned there is a planned flood drop in, at Shepton Mallet in February. As soon as they had a date, they would let the LCN team know. She offered to speak to Paul Ellison to try and extend the area with the help of Somerset Councillors and will ask government if they could help as they had a fund there. There was an email contact on the gov.uk website where a person could report that they had experienced flooding.

David Lewsey – will make sure he is included.

North Wootton, Westbury sub Mendip, Easton, Godney were also flooded.

It was identified that there is a none reporting of flooding. It would be appreciated if residents could report flooding and near

misses, flooded roads and blocked drains. There is a 50 house threshold to get government financial support. The reporting is important.

Scott McMillan mentioned that in regard to flooding, the community did not know how to report it. He was working with 3 families who had felt abandoned by all the Authorities and been unclear as to who to ask for help from and who to report it to.

SC Cllr Heather Shearer affirmed that it was discussed how to have resilience and planning in place.

Cllr Wyke further affirmed that Somerset Council was keen to keep supporting the valued volunteer organisations.

In response to a question about where funds would come from, SC Cllr Ros Wyke explained that a number of charities were kept going from the legacy districts and so they have funding for the last two years, and they should not have missed out. She validated that individual organisations may have been mislaid in the transition as they integrated the finance system and if any charity has not been contacted then should contact her.

It was mentioned that previously, at the first LCN meeting in Priddy, the room thought that the LCN would address how they were going to proceed with their priorities. However, what was discussed then had not come up again. He further stated that only active travel had moved forward and wanted to know what were the plans to start looking at the other issues.

Philip Blatchford from Emborough asked whether the LCNs would still run after Somerset Council's proposed budget cuts.

Cllr Ros Wyke assured everyone that they were not going to remove the LCNs. The Lead member, Theo Butt Philip, made it clear at Scrutiny, that LCNs were not a budget saving.

1. She further confirmed that there were 3 things to consider:
Achieving continuity from one meeting to another and how to build on things rather than reinventing the discussion and the agenda.
2. The staffing of the LCNs and how we support them.
3. Realistic expectations and focus

Item 32: **Topics continued from last meeting (Held on 16 November 2023)**

Item 32a: **Update re winter planning**

Scott McMillan, Volunteer Network gave an updated on activities since he last spoke.

- They have run three or four sessions a week. They have provided warm spaces but the ones they sold as warm spaces were not popular but once they attached a purpose to it, such as arts and crafts, game afternoons, men's working groups or discussion groups it drew in crowds.
- They ran these workshops in Glastonbury but people came from as far as Cheddar, Shepton, Yeovil and Bridgwater and surrounds to the workshops. They always provided a hot meal on the day as well.
- There has been a trend that after individuals had come to a workshop for a couple of weeks, they would start talking to the volunteers. They had a few domestic abuse cases come to light, homeless people as well as a lady in her 80s who was being bullied by her landlord.
- After a few weeks people felt more comfortable and safer. They spoke to the volunteers about problems they had as they felt less embarrassed and spoke to the volunteers privately.
- They have started running a cookery school using some of the recommendations coming from the NHS, such as making large amounts of food and pickling and jarring them, for example, pumpkin jam, so that it did not take power to keep the food.
- The Volunteer Network had managed to secure some funding from a college and a private source which meant that if any of the Parish Councillors or Parishes wanted to undertake anything, they had the capacity to train, support and mentor volunteers over the first six months. If this is relevant to anyone in the LCN, then come and talk to the Volunteer

Network.

Item 32b: **The Filo Project**

Gail Norris from The Filo Project gave a presentation on the Filo Project. She drew attention to:

- They operated in the Mendip area.
- They were looking to recruit new hosts as a paid position in the Wells and surrounding area.
- They were looking for new clients for their service in the Wells and surrounding area.
- They offered small group day care in a host's house.
 - They go for day care for the day.
 - They were picked up and taken back to the host's house where they play games, watch birds etc.
 - They shared a meal which they had sometimes helped to prepare. There was always a hot home cooked meal as well as a positive activity in the afternoon.
- It was open to anybody.
- They were affiliated with Somerset Council so if someone was eligible for adult social care funding, they could apply for the funding.
- If you were not eligible for funding, they accepted private clients as well.
- The project was open to the Elderly. Initially it was people with dementia, but it expanded to anyone who was isolated. It felt more like a day out with friends.
- The day ran from 10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday. Therefore, people attend once a week on a given day and always attend the same host group with the same group of people in order to promote camaraderie.

- They were not yet VAT exempt and the cost was £85.20 for a day including VAT which worked out to £14.20 an hour and included everything mentioned above as well as “*Family Filo Support*”. This is essentially a service giving information, support and advice to family members. The only additional cost were travel costs which depended on the distance travelled.

Item 32c: **Warm hub update**

Lisa Poole from xxx Parish Council, spoke about how Volunteer Network inspired them since the last meeting as an agency who were doing lots of things.

- Villages have the own identities and own strong networks.
- Good awareness about local networks. The more local the more networking there is.
- Lot of residents are very appreciated of the resources from Wells City Council.
- Welfare and sign posting working group set a task identifying what they could do to support some sort of warm space and a hug in a mug and what already existed and not to duplicate anything.
- They decided to:
 - Promote as much as possible all of the existing providers, such as the Filo Project.
 - Not a competition and not trying to overlap other groups as they did not have the resources, expertise, equipment to do this but they can promote existing ones within their existing capabilities and give some residents an extra option where they feel isolated, hungry or cold.
 - Invite people to approach us in order for us to supplement their existing network whether it is hiring a hall or finding somewhere where people can get together.

Item 32d: **Wells Community Network**

Philip Welch, from Wells City Council, told how the Wells Coronavirus Network, a voluntary organisation formed in March 2020 to help residents through the pandemic, had expanded its activities by forming a Wells Welcome Hub for refugees from Ukraine, buying a trishaw to give vulnerable people free rides around the city, and organised events like January's Community Day in Wells Cathedral which attracted thousands of people.

Philip also thanked the LCN for putting him in touch with Scott McMillan of Voluntary Network with whom WCN would like to work.

Philip said a police officer used to attend Wells City Council's monthly meetings to give an update on crime in the city but none had attended since March last year and the police website did not breakdown the crime figures into where they happened in the police area, which incidentally is different to the LCN's.

Item 32e: **Active Travel Working Group**

It was suggested to form a core group to continue this and stimulate some activity. It was suggested that more active travel reduces traffic. Walking and cycling is good for your health and mental wellbeing. One of the areas where funding was increasing was for active travel, which the government was trying to promote.

The following points were comments from attendees.

- Cycle path along strawberry line was multiuser. A person could walk there and ride horses.
- It was suggested to create paths parallel to main roads to protect the cyclist and the pedestrian from road traffic.
- Some towns in Mendip have Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) that were drawn up by professionals in order to enable people to move around the town without using a car. These would become important in due course to various Parish Councils.

- Last time research was done, it was determined that just over 60% of road traffic in the area were doing a less than a 5 mile journey..
- This needs to be led by local people wanting change. SC Cllr Ros Wyke asked people to come and talk to her if they saw that there was a local need.
- It was further determined that Somerset, like most rural areas in the country, have the most dangerous rural roads and there were lots of deaths last year.

Item 33: **Update on Somerset Councils Finances**

There had been talk previously about Wells and Rural LCN being involved in a local plan and the local plan team were going to be holding a seminar in the near future and inviting stakeholders to get involved.

Somerset Council Cllr Ros Wyke explained that they have an existing local plan from the Mendip legacy District (the Mendip local plan). There was a judicial review by one of the Parishes who didn't like the inspector's direction as there needed to be more housing in the North East of the district. The Judge upheld the Parish against the planning inspector and the seminar next month is going to be about the additional 550 houses which we need to be found within the existing local plan. This is a limited remit and discussion because it is constrained in lots of different ways. There has been a call for sites, these have been reviewed and once it has gone through the internal process it will go out for public consultation in the normal way.

The new Somerset Council has to produce a new county wide plan by 2028. To do this, Somerset Council needs to do a considerable amount of work on consultations on what the employment land is, what the landscape is and what the travel is. Further to this, Somerset Council needs to add in the transport local plan and minerals and waste local plan, which is particularly important because most of the minerals are within the mendip area, and they are also a nationally significant contribution to the UK's mineral supply.

Somerset Council Financial Discussion

Group discussions took place about what could be done locally regarding asset and service devolution and ways in which Parish Councils could help Somerset Council in their financial crisis, the following points were highlighted:

- Focus around traffic, speeding and dangerous junctions in particular.
- Get together with highway colleagues and the police to join us for those meetings to think about what we can do to make it safer, particularly in rural areas but also on some of the major routes and junctions in the area.
- Some observations from a police perspective:
 - There is quite a lot of organised street begging which takes place in Wells by organised syndicates and the beggars are not local.
 - Police are spending quite a lot of time dealing with mental health issues.
- What devolving assets really means.
- Positives and the negatives of the services for the receiving organisation.
- Whether it was not only City, Town and Parish councils which have assets devolved to them, but also charities.
- Sharing hedge and grass cutting and other road maintenance which can go beyond just Wells and St Cuthbert's Out and include some of the villages.
- Residents don't know what the police are doing. The Wells City Council have an item on the agenda every month and the police don't give a report or come to tell us what they are doing.

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Actions

- **Cllr Heather Shearer as, Chair of the Police and Crime Panel**

- make a comprehensive list about concerning issues for them to respond to.

- **Cllr Ros Wyke**

Could there be a discussion with the police on what to do about the high number of deaths on the road and the most dangerous spots.

- **Avon and Somerset Police**

PCSO Wyatt mentioned that the needs across each district were different. He concluded that Wells needs CCTV but this would not happen due to the financial crisis and pointed out that they needed more officers on the beat and stated that it was something which Somerset Council could do without a large cash injection.

Item 34: **Preparation for future meetings**

- Get working groups up and running to discuss:
 - Set up a core group for active travel before the next meeting
 - Flooding
 - Highways and traffic support for the Highways team
 - Police would need a more specific topic to be able to present at a meeting. Avon & Somerset Police provided a link to find specific information and a location map. [Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](http://www.police.uk)

Item 35: **Dates of future meetings**

25th March at Godney Village Hall, originally discussed but **date**

change to 30th April after the fact.

4th July is the AGM - venue to be confirmed and open to suggestions.

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