

**Minutes of the Exmoor LCN Pilot Highways Subgroup  
Held on Friday 15 July 2022,  
At the Dulverton Sports Pavilion from 10.00am – 1.00pm**

**Present:**

Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)	SCC/SWT
Cllr Frances Nicholson	SCC
Andrew Turner	SCC
Stephen Marsh	SCC
Craig Gowan	SCC
Kate Brown	SCC
Luke Green	SCC
Kate Brown	SCC
Bev Norman	SCC
Mike Ellicott	Exford PC
Christine Dubery	Dulverton TC (Town)
Sarah Buchanan	Brompton Regis (Brendon Hills)
Roger Webber	(Moor)
Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe PC
Sam Murrell (Clerk)	SWT

**1. Apologies**

Scott Davies / Mike Egleton (Milestone), Andrew Bray, Jeremy Hickson.

**2. To review the Minutes and Action Points of the previous meeting on Friday 15 May 2022.**

**Action point** – Bev Norman (SCC) to meet with Roger Webber (Moor rep) on site to explore the options. – *Due to take place immediately following today's meeting.*

**Action Point** – All parishes need to appoint a Highways Warden who will ultimately be responsible for liaison with the Highways Steward, and SCC officers if necessary – *Seems to be getting there but some gaps remain.*

**Action Point** - Luke Green offered to show Andrew Bray (Vale Rep) how to use the one.network website polygon plotter, to set up and receive email alerts or pings via email when highway works are added to an area. – *Completed.*

**Action Point** – Scott Davies / Milestone – To draw up generic traffic management plans – with bespoke offer based on zones. – *Bev Norman to liaise with Scott to ensure open communication and that messages are relayed back to the Highways Subgroup meetings.*

**Action Point** – Andrew Turner – Modify the funding paper to include planned and reactive work specific to Exmoor, based on current delivery. *The paper has not been modified, as it needs to be representative of Somerset not just*

*Exmoor. A consensus was reached on the types of schemes that could come forward on Exmoor and it was agreed that there needs to be a paper trail to ensure a consistent approach.*

*The legal standards of maintenance are well documented when it comes to routine works such as verge cutting, grass cutting, gully emptying etc. There has to be a balance over and above that to decide between aspirational, affordable and ultimately deliverable work.*

**Action Point** – Parish Online. Andrew Turner and Cllr Pugsley to talk this through outside the meeting to determine a way forward. *It had been agreed to adopt the parish online application for use across the Exmoor Area Panel. Those parishes that had already subscribed to the system to contact Andrew Turner directly to talk through the various options around refunds.*

### **Update on the Exford Road Slippage**

This work has been contracted out to WSP who are specialist technical engineers and they have been carrying out site surveys to determine the scope of the works.

Once the survey is ready it will be passed to SCC Highways to determine and action. SCC as the Highways Authority will undertake all liaison work with the landowner and parishes as and when appropriate, according to the sequence of events required.

**Action Point** – Andrew Turner – When the time is right, information relating to the remedial work taking place is conveyed to the Cutcombe and Exford parish clerks so that they can communicate to local community. It is important that the lines of communication remain open. SCC will also take responsibility for contacting the landowner(s) as and when appropriate.

## **3. Scheme Promotion / Review and Update**

### **3.1 Highways Schemes – Craig Gowan**

**Action Point** – Highways Briefing Manual. Can this please be emailed out to all parishes so that there is clarity on routine maintenance. (Or a link to the relevant place on the website?) This helps with responding to queries from members of the public.

An emergency bridge repair has been undertaken at Luccombe.

Concern was expressed about Marsh Bridge, Dulverton. It may have been hit by a vehicle, because one of the footbridge posts looked awry.

**Action Point:** Sam Murrell reported this on 26/07/2022 via the SCC Reporting Defects portal. *Structures reported back on 4 August that they had visited and noted the works required. None are of an urgent nature so will be added to Bridges and Structures outstanding works database where they will be pick up in the fullness of time.*

### **3.2 Surface Dressing – Craig Gowan**

Surface dressing programme is now completed and will be removed from the work-plan.

Some drainage schemes have been added.

The Selworthy A39 resurfacing will now take place at some point during Sept/October. This will be outside of peak hours working and the main tourist season. Communications will be released soon.

### **3.3 Traffic Schemes – Kate Brown**

#### **3.3.1 A39 Tivington**

Reduction in the speed limit to 50mph at the request of Luccombe and Selworthy PCs. Subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Progressing.

#### **3.3.2 Exford Speed Indicator Devices (SID)**

The position of the posts for siting the SIDs has been identified. The road markings (white lining) need to be refreshed. Currently undertaking a speed data capture exercise to determine the average speed of travel through the village. Consulting on a TRO to extend the 20mph speed limit over the bridge. Progressing.

#### **3.3.3 Cutcombe - Extension of 20mph reduction in speed (TRO)**

The parish has agreed to subsidise the cost. TRO is required. There was frustration expressed at the time taken to implement, but there is a legally binding consultation process which must be followed before works can be carried out. Progressing.

#### **3.3.4 Timberscombe – TRO and warning about horses on the highway**

Timberscombe have requested signage to warn drivers to slow down due to horses/riders on the highway. Also looking at TRO to reduce speed.

### **3.4 Public Utility Works – Luke Green**

Cllr Frances Nicholson and Christine Dubery wanted it minuted that the collaborative working demonstrated by the LCN Highways pilot was a very good way of working with partners. She personally thanked Luke Green and the Streetworks team for their help and support over the recently busy weeks.

Luke Green in turn said that he wanted to thank Christine and Dulverton Town Council for being accessible and working through mutually agreeable solutions. The current way of working was benefitting everyone.

Most of the recent utility works had been confined to the Dulverton area, but the team were also responding to reactive and responsive works where required on Exmoor.

A question was raised about returning the Highway to a specific quality standard once works were completed. Luke Green responded that inspections were carried out on a percentage of the works, dependent on the classification of the road. He asked that any reinstatement work that appeared not to meet the required standard, should be reported via the online portal so that it could be followed up and investigated.

## 4. Devolved Funding

### 4.1 Requests for funding to be submitted in writing

It is important that funding requests demonstrate the need for the work and highlight what is required. Cllrs Pugsley and Nicholson will evaluate the submissions before the next Area Panel meeting to determine what schemes go forward.

Successful schemes should add value, be community oriented and demonstrate local need. They should be submitted via the parish council clerk, but letters of support from partners will be taken in consideration.

All requests should be sent, irrespective of cost so that an overall picture can be obtained of the aspirations of communities. The general opinion was that it was better to be oversubscribed with applications until the money was spent, than underspend and have a surplus remaining.

**Action Point** – How are schemes communicated? Is there a standard reporting feature for parishes to submit their requests so that all EOs are treated fairly and equitably? Steve Marsh and Andrew Turner agreed to tweak the process. Suggestion that an online form be established with clear guidelines on the information required. An email link be made available and circulated so there is clarity on how to apply for devolved funding.

## 5. Highway Steward (Andrew Turner)

### 5.1.1 Update on Highway Steward Scheme

Richard Gay the Highway Steward had already commenced work and was proving a success. The requests via the workplan were being downloaded directly to his tablet and he was able to attend to defects immediately. There had already been positive responses from the parishes he had visited, and it is proving that in respect of minor maintenance, he is providing low technical but high value work.

There are various methods for communicating the requirement for work: -

- Via the Parish Council online form / link
- Through his own empowerment – doing work he finds whilst out attending to his business.
- Via the Area Highways Office – it was agreed that this was the least favourable option. Work should not come via this route as it was moving away from the spirit of the pilot scheme and away from localism.

### 5.1.2 Action Point – Recirculate the Highways link / work request form.

Can all responses please be sent to the team direct at [HighwaySteward@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:HighwaySteward@somerset.gov.uk).

Parishes are encouraged to use this method of communication rather than the telephone. The advantage is that he can plan his work

accordingly and is not spending all day engaged in telephone conversations. The planner is updated immediately, and it prevents work getting missed or duplicated.

**5.1.3** A query was raised about ongoing maintenance on a cyclical basis by Christine Dubery. It was discussed that this would be categorised as “in progress” and there was no need to submit a request for each visit. Once the work has been recorded the planner will have it listed and there is no need to repeat.

**5.1.4** A query was raised about disposal of green waste from the verge maintenance work. Richard Gay was unsure where it was to be disposed of?

**Action Point** – Andrew Turner to check. It is likely that this can be taken to the SCC Highways depot for disposal and should not be returned to the verges due to contaminants. Andrew agreed to feed back his findings.

**5.1.5** There was general conversation about visibility of signage on the highway, and legal requirements. Undergrowth covering signs and overhanging branches was deemed appropriate for the Highway Steward to progress, and it was asked if defects could be reported through the online form.

**5.1.6** Monthly feedback – It is important that parishes continue to provide feedback about what is working and what isn't. The workplan will be shared monthly, to keep everyone updated on the scope of the work being carried out. Will also provide insight on who is funnelling through the requests and encourage more parish engagement.

## **5.2 Update on Programme**

Andrew Turner invited feedback from the subgroup on how they felt the pilot was progressing. Overall comment was positive with members stating it was a good way of debating issues and sharing knowledge and information. It was acknowledged that it would have to be significantly scaled up to be workable across Somerset as a whole.

**Action Point** – Andrew Turner and Craig Gowan to consider methods of delivery on a larger scale.

## **6 Broker Role Update**

Andrew Turner stated that despite advertising the position as an internal and external secondment there had been no interest in this job, and the situation was still vacant.

A discussion ensued, where it was pointed out that most prospective applicants may have been deterred by the wording of the role and considered it was aimed at a Highways Specialist. Cllr Nicholson agreed that the remit was much wider than dealing with specific highways issues, and it was likely to be widened out as the requirements of the LCN became more demanding. It was probably more appropriate to recruit a good administrator with strong local connection and communication channels.

**Action Point** – Andrew Turner and Steve Marsh to revisit this appointment and speak to HR regarding recruitment / readvertisement.

## **7 Parish Online**

The system has been purchased and is available to the Exmoor Area parishes. It was agreed that a training/briefing session would be a good way of rolling out to all parishes simultaneously. Christine Dubery offered to host this at the Dulverton Town Hall as the facilities are equipped to present to many people.

**Action Point** – Christine Dubery (DTC) to liaise with Andrew Turner about mutually beneficial time to present parish online. Ensure that all clerks or a “tech champion” from each parish can attend.

## **8 Recommendations to the Exmoor Area Panel**

None at this time.

## **9. A.O.B**

**9.1** Next meeting of the Area Panel is 1 September.  
Hall will be available for pre-meeting between 6.30-7.30pm to enable the annual Highway Warden update. (Access from 6pm)  
Highway Steward (Richard Gay) and Area Highways Manager (K. Bridgwater) invited to attend.

PC Dan Cox from ASP Road Safety will be in attendance.

## **10. Dates and Venues for meetings going forward**

<b>Exmoor Panel Date</b>	<b>Proposed Highways Sub-Group Date</b>
1 September 2022	<del>15 July 2022</del>
24 November 2022	14 October 2022
12 January 2023	9 December 2022
16 March 2023	10 February 2023

**Meeting closed at 12:44**