

Exmoor Area Panel

Thursday, 16th March, 2023,
7.00 pm

The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe



Somerset West
and Taunton

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the Exmoor Area Panel Meeting held on 12 January 2023** (Pages 5 - 12)
To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Exmoor Area Panel, and deal with any matters arising.
3. **Introduction to SCC Executive Cllr Val Keitch - Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity**
4. **Presentation on Local Community Networks** (Pages 13 - 28)
A presentation on Local Community Networks (LCN) by Frances Gully, Service Manager for LCN Development.
5. **Somerset Prepared - Nicola Dawson, Civil Contingencies Manager**
A presentation on the subject of flood preparation and other civil emergencies highlighting how communities can prepare for such situations.
6. **Avon and Somerset Police Report**
The Exmoor Neighbourhood Beat team will provide an update on local issues.
7. **SCC Highways Matters** (Pages 29 - 38)
To include feedback on the Highways Subgroup Meeting – minutes attached.
8. **Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)**
To receive an update from officers on local issues.
9. **Parish Lengthsman Scheme and Update**

10. Items to be brought forward by Parishes

The deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Monday 13 March 2023.

11. Dates for Exmoor LCN Meetings going forward

Exmoor Pilot/LCN Dates	Proposed Highways Date
16 March 2023	10 February 2023
Tuesday 25 April	
Thursday 8 June	
Thursday 7 September	

To be held at the Moorland Hall, Cutcombe commencing at 7.00pm.

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If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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Minutes of the Exmoor Area Panel Meeting

Held on Thursday 12 January 2023,

At the Moorland Hall, Cutcombe

The meeting commenced at 7:04pm

Present: Jan Aldridge & Howard Albery (Brushford), Roger Foxwell (Cutcombe), Mike Ellicott & Jeremy Hickman (Exford), Ann Sparling & Dave Powell (Luxborough), Duncan & Susanne McCarlis (Porlock) Fran A' Brook (Upton), Colin Wilkins (Winsford) , Tony Howard and Alan Collins (Withypool & Hawkridge).

Tony Brooks from Crowcombe Parish Council.

Also Present:

SWT/SCC Cllr Steven Pugsley, SCC Cllr Frances Nicholson (arrived at 8pm)

Officers:

Sam Murrell (SWT)

PCSO Michelle Haines

Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner, Mark Shelford

1. Election of the Chairperson

The meeting was opened by the Clerk, who invited nominations from the floor for the position of the Chairperson. The decision was unanimous, and Cllr Steven Pugsley was returned unopposed for another year.

2. Election of the Vice-Chairperson

From the Chair, Cllr Steven Pugsley proposed Cllr Mike Ellicott, which was seconded by Cllr Roger Foxwell. No other nominations were received so Cllr Mike Ellicott was returned for another year.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Elliott and Patricia Bainbridge (Brompton Ralph PC), Sarah Buchanan (Brompton Regis), Sally Moran (Clatworthy), John Anson (Cutcombe), Margaret Rawle, Christine Dubery & Nick Thwaites (Dulverton and SWT), Andrew Bray (Wootton Courtenay), Ruth McArthur (ENP), Andrew Turner (SCC), Kevin Bridgwater (SCC), Nicola Dawson (SCC Prepared), Phil Collings (DSFRS).

4. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Exmoor Area Panel held on 24 November 2022, and matters arising.

(Minutes of the meeting of the Exmoor Area Panel meeting held on 24 November 2022 were circulated with the agenda)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Exmoor Area Panel meeting held on 24 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

5. Avon & Somerset Police, Crime Commissioner (PCC) – Mark Shelford

The Chair welcomed back Mark Shelford who had agreed to return annually and provide an update on his work.

Mark had attended a conference on the previous day (Wednesday 11 January), which had been facilitated by the Avon and Somerset Policing Team working with Women's Aid and was hosted at Butlins. The aims of the conference were to raise awareness on: -

- Drugs – dealing, and spotting the signs of drug misuse;
- Domestic Abuse,
- Child Protection and safeguarding.

It was well attended by statutory agencies and Butlins staff and was a good networking opportunity.

The PCC's main areas of focus and priorities are:-

- **Cybercrime** – 50% of all reported crime in Avon and Somerset has an element of computer fraud/scamming and is carried out online. The PCC is taking steps to address this by encouraging more graduate recruitment and sponsorship of learning through the private sector, to enable the employment of Cyber-Police. He advised that the police are doing all they can to alert people of the pitfalls and the STOP – THINK – BE AWARE campaign. Less than 1.5% of resource is currently allocated to this type of crime, and he is doing what he can to address this. 75% of all cyber crime has a foreign criminal element.
- **Child Sexploitation** – 15% of all reported crime in Avon and Somerset centred around vulnerable children, county lines and other child exploitation. His office was working with SCC to establish safer networks for those children who found themselves on the wrong side of the law.
- **Recruiting to the Police Volunteer Panels.** The deadline to volunteer to be part of these panels has been extended to **31 January 2023**. The PCC is very keen that representatives from all parts of the County are encouraged to participate. He handed out some leaflets at the meeting but further information can be found on the [website](#).
- **ASP Precept Survey Online.** The precept accounts for 41% of police funding and the rest is from central Government grants. The Government also determines the maximum amount by which PCCs can increase the precept each year. For next year, the Government has allowed PCCs to increase the precept by £15 for a band D household (equivalent to 6%). The Government assume that PCCs will ask for the maximum allowed and use this assumption in their budget setting. [Complete this survey](#) to let the PCC know your

thoughts on increasing the amount of money which goes towards policing through your council tax.

Questions from the Panel

What is being done to tackle Rural Crime?

The Rural Affairs Policing team has had more resource implemented in the form of vehicles and two designated police drones. It is anticipated that more officers will be deployed here to double the size of the existing team.

493 extra police officers have been recruited across the Force Area.

In addition a special Task Force, under Operation Remedy can be targeted at specific crime areas and share intelligence in order to try and tackle crime hot-spots.

Catalytic Converter Crime – how is this being addressed?

Owners of such vehicles are being given preventative advice. Police are targeting scrap dealers who will ultimately be sold the stolen catalytic converters in an attempt to reduce the market on precious metals. Theft of this type has become rarer in recent months, which gives the PCC reason to believe that the crime prevention methods and deterrents are working.

Scamming – what can we do to prevent this?

ASP have a team of 2 ladies who can give talks on raising awareness of Cybercrime. They have responded positively to invitations from parish councils. Any parish council wishing to book their services can email fraudprotect@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

If someone is the victim of a cyber-crime it needs to be reported in the first instance to Action Fraud who will refer it to the relevant organisation. (This could be either the police or the regional crime squad). The police have also produced a booklet called the Little Book of Big Scams.

<https://media.aspolice.net/uploads/production/20220520100335/The-little-book-of-big-scams.pdf>.

Can Parish Councillors attend the PCC Forum being held in Taunton on 24 January?

Yes – absolutely. Invitations should have been distributed to parish clerks as well as the district and county councillors. Participation is actively encouraged. There will hopefully be further dates added in the calendar.

6. Avon and Somerset Police Report – PCSO 8913 Michelle Haines

Reported crime in the Exmoor area remains low, but the following incidents have occurred since November: -

- Chainsaws were taken from an outbuilding in Brompton Ralph;
- A vehicle was stolen from Skilgate;
- A trailer was stolen from Luccombe, but was recovered attached to the stolen vehicle above. Investigations are ongoing into the perpetrators.

- A rogue trader has been apprehended in respect of overcharging for some gardening work. This took place in Dulverton, where the relatives of an elderly vulnerable resident reported the trader to the police.
- All victims have been visited and crime reduction advice passed on.
- In partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police colleagues, Operation Tonic was run over the festive season to target drink/drug drivers and take appropriate measures.

In addition, the following community events have been happening: -

- Various bike marking events around the district. These will be advertised in the ASP newsletter and on social media. Bikes will be marked for free and registered on the national computer database.
- Funded trailer marking at Cutcombe market was a success.
- Promotion of Farm Watch and Horse Watch to rural communities. There are currently 96 members of FarmWatch on the Exmoor list. 16 new members signed up in 2022, and the hope is to increase on this number going forward. (2 have already signed up in January). It is a voluntary scheme, and nobody can be forced to join, but the police are very keen to promote its benefits.

Post Minute Note:

Drink driving leaflet supplied by PCSO Michelle Haines

7. SCC Highways Update – Cllrs Steven Pugsley and Frances Nicholson

Due to the various emergencies that had occurred around the county on the Somerset Levels and Cleve Hill, both Andrew Turner and Kevin Bridgwater had tendered their apologies for the evening's meeting.

Winter Maintenance Programme

A meeting had been held with the SCC Highways Team to check on the frequency of gritting on green routes. This has been bottomed out and it was agreed that if the temperature was going to be consistently below freezing for more than 24hours then the green routes needed to be done. (Previous thinking was 72hours or longer). It was agreed that connecting communities should be a priority.

Highway Wardens – Emergency Salting Telephone number

Can an emergency telephone number please be supplied to the Highways Wardens. This was previously available on the website but has since been removed.

Salt bins/bags

Parishes that had placed their salt orders were now having these filled. If there were problems with the locations of the grit bags (dropped in the wrong place!) can this please be reported to the Highway office as a matter of urgency at <https://services.somerset.gov.uk/contact-somerset-highways>.

14 Grit bins are awaiting delivery as a result of the devolved funding requests. Bins are 220L capacity and fastened via a hasp and staple. (6 black bins as requested have been allocated to Withypool and Hawkridge, whilst the remainder

will be yellow). They needed to be sited 450mm from the edge of the road and SCC highways will need to approve the location of any new bins. The bulk delivery will be made to the Milestone depot in Minehead, and then the Highway Steward will drop them at a designated rendezvous point. Sam will be contacting those parishes shortly who placed an order to determine the best place to deliver. It will also provide an opportunity for the new Highway Steward to meet the parish highway wardens.

Parishes needed to let SCC know when their salt stocks needed replenishing, so that they can meet the demands of the winter weather.

Blocked drains/gullies

Where water was coming off the highway and there was a threat to life and or property it needed to be reported as a matter of urgency. Less urgent drainage issues should be reported via the defects portal so that the highways maintenance team could respond accordingly.

Kevin Bridgwater had liaised with Roger Foxwell before the meeting, because he was unable to find the report on the long-standing issue of the Shearwells drains. It was clarified that Sam Murrell would have a conversation with Roger on the following day to tackle the issue once and for all.

Post Minute Note:

Using google maps Roger Foxwell clearly identified the stretch of road and 5 drains that were affected. This was transposed into Parish Online, and Sam reported it on the SCC Defects portal with the map attached. The SCC defects number for future reference is 666419. Once the site has been inspected, an assessment can be made on the work required.

Winsford – Halse Lane

It was reported that a utilities trench that had been backfilled and made good incorrectly had now sunk. Winsford PC had reported it via the portal which normally elicited a prompt remedy, but on this occasion SCC had stated it was not their responsibility. Sam agreed to follow up with the streetworks team, who could liaise with the contractor about rectifying the poor workmanship.

Exford Landslip

An up to date report on the current situation had been circulated to the parishes in recent weeks. It was likely that the remedial work to be undertaken would be carried out in the spring (May?) to take advantage of the longer daylight hours. Once the scale of the work was fully costed and the pattern of working was established, Andrew Turner had agreed that a public meeting could be held to apprise everyone of the situation.

Exford Bridge

During the recent rain a tree had washed down-river and was now resting against the central arch. This had been reported to both SCC Bridges (as owner of the bridge) and the Environment Agency who have responsibility for the river. Both organisations stated they would task work teams to attend to the situation, when it was safe to do so. An interesting point to note is that the tree has changed the

river flow, and as such the current was removing some of the problematic silt build up in this location.

Withypool Bridge

Tony Howard reported that a tree was now resting against one of the arches at Withypool Bridge. He was requested to report this via the portal to the Bridges and Structures team.

Highway Steward Update

The new Highway Steward, Tim Williams took up his employment at the start of January. His main area of focus for the moment will be picking up the outstanding work from late November and December. He will be using the online job request form so please continue to report your work requests via this method.

Please [click here](#) to access the Exmoor LCN – Highway Steward Job Request.

Urgent works such as blocked drains should be reported via the defects portal to ensure a swift response. General repairs such as potholes, road damage and other problems outside of your parish boundary should continue to be reported via the SCC online portal. www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/.

He will be active around the district in his truck which is a Milestone vehicle.

Exmoor Pilot – Satisfaction Survey

Can parishes please complete the Qtr3 Satisfaction survey, so that the team can determine what is working and what needs to be done? This is for the period from October until the end of December. Thank you to those who have already done this.

8. Somerset Prepared – Nicola Dawson, *Civil Contingencies Manager*

Due to being on standby to attend the emergency on the Somerset Levels, Nicola Dawson sent apologies and re-arranged to attend the March meeting of the Exmoor Area Panel.

9. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Issues (DSFRS)

No representative in attendance. Apologies tendered due to Emergency response.

10. Exmoor National Park Authority Issues (ENPA)

No representative in attendance.

11. Parish Lengthsman Scheme

Despite reminders being issued at the beginning of December, Dulverton Town Council is still waiting to hear from Exton, Selworthy and Minehead Without and Wootton Courtenay parishes about their requirements for the coming financial year. Can the clerks please make contact with Dulverton Town Council ASAP.

12. Items brought forward by parishes / AOB

Exmoor Local Community Network (LCN) Pilot – Cllr Steven Pugsley Establishment of the LCN boundaries

Councillor Pugsley made the panel aware of the publication of the [SCC Executive agenda which will take place on Wednesday 18 January 2023](#). The long awaited report on the proposed boundaries for the new LCNs had been released, together with a breakdown of how the parishes were to be distributed. The report also included the proposed terms of reference to be adopted and outlined an administrative budget proposal of £300K.

The Exmoor Area Panel was very pleased with the outcome of the consultation and the fact that the Exmoor pilot had been recognised as a working entity. There would not need to be many amendments to the current ways of working going forward. General comments from the floor included praise for the Highways Steward scheme, and the fact that a devolved budget meant that the parishes could prioritise which projects needed to be done most urgently. It was also felt that communications had vastly improved.

Other LCNS may have different priorities, but for the moment the Highways model should continue into the new financial year for the Exmoor LCN.

Further information about Local Community Networks can be found on the [New Somerset Council website](#).

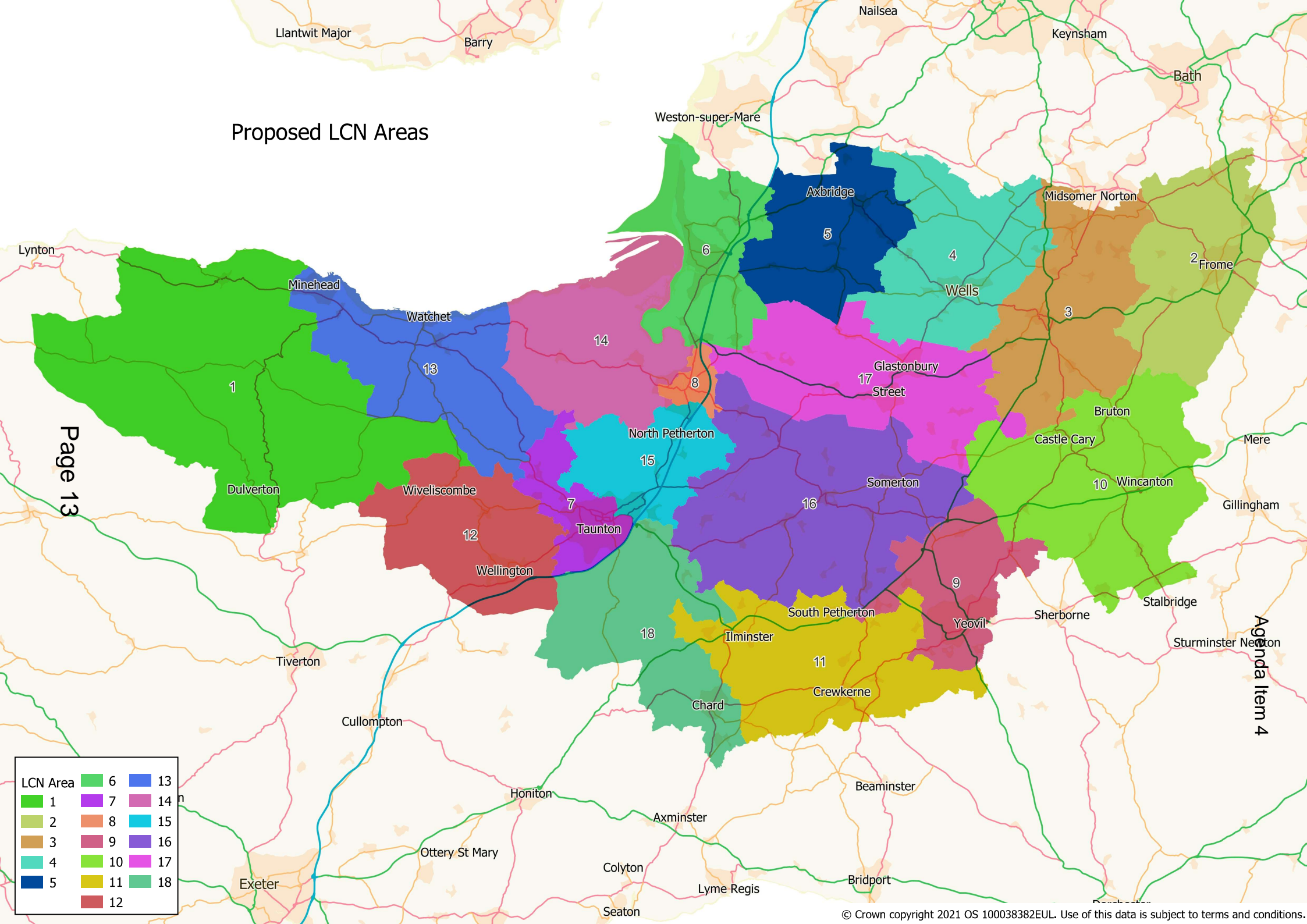
13. Dates and Venues for meetings going forward.

Exmoor Panel Date	Proposed Highways Sub-Group Date
16 March 2023	10 February 2023

It is hoped that Nicola Dawson, Civil Contingencies Manager (Somerset Prepared) will be attending the March meeting

(The Meeting ended at 9.05pm)

Proposed LCN Areas



LCN Area	Color
1	Green
2	Light Green
3	Brown
4	Teal
5	Dark Blue
6	Light Green
7	Purple
8	Orange
9	Red
10	Light Green
11	Yellow
12	Red
13	Blue
14	Pink
15	Cyan
16	Purple
17	Magenta
18	Green

Appendix 2 Proposed LCN Areas (names are working titles)

LCN Area 1 - Exmoor

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Brompton Ralph	Dulverton and Exmoor ED
Brompton Regis	
Brushford	
Clatworthy	
Cutcombe	
Dulverton	
Exford	
Exmoor	
Exton	
Huish Champflower	
Luccombe	
Luxborough	
Minehead Without	
Oare	
Porlock	
Selworthy	
Skilgate	
Timberscombe	
Treborough	
Upton	
Winsford	
Withypool and Hawkridge	
Wootton Courtenay	

LCN Area 3 - Shepton

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Ashwick	Mendip Central and East ED Mendip Hills ED Mendip South ED Shepton Mallet ED
Batcombe	
Chilcompton	
Coleford	
Cranmore	
Croscombe	
Ditcheat	
Doulting	
Downhead	
East Pennard	
Evercreech	
Holcombe	
Kilmersdon	
Leigh-on-Mendip	
Milton Clevedon	
Pilton	
Pylle	
Shepton Mallet	
Stoke St Michael	
Ston Easton	
Stratton on the Fosse	

LCN Area 2 - Frome

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Beckington	Frome East ED Frome North ED Frome West ED Mendip Central and East ED Mendip South ED
Berkley	
Buckland Dinham	
Frome TC	
Great Elm CP	
Hemington	
Lullington	
Mells	
Norton St. Philip	
Nunney	
Rode	
Selwood	
Tellisford	
Trudoxhill	
Upton Noble	
Wanstrow	
Whatley	
Witham Friary	

LCN Area 4 – Wells and Rural

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Binegar	Mendip Hills ED Mendip West ED Wells ED
Chewton Mendip	
Emborough	
Godney	
Litton	
North Wootton	
Priddy	
St Cuthbert Out	
Wells	
Wookey	
Westbury sub Mendip	

LCN Area 5 – Cheddar and Axbridge

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Axbridge	Brent ED Cheddar ED King Alfred ED Mendip West ED
Badgworth	
Chapel Allerton	
Cheddar	
Compton Bishop	
Mark	
Rodney	
Shipham	
Weare	
Wedmore	

LCN Area 6 - Burnham

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Berrow	Brent ED
Brean	Burnham on Sea North ED
Brent Knoll	Highbridge and Burnham South ED
Burnham Without	Huntspill ED
Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge	
East Brent	
East Huntspill	
Lympham	
Pawlett	
Puriton	
West Huntspill	
Woolavington	

LCN Area 7- Taunton

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Bishops Hull	Bishop's Hull and Taunton West ED
Comeytrove	Comeytrove and Trull ED
Staplegrove	Lydeard ED
Bishops Lydeard	Rowbarton and Staplegrove ED
Cotthelstone	Taunton East ED
Cotford St Luke	Taunton North ED
Norton Fitzwarren	Taunton South ED
TAUNTON TC	
Trull	

LCN Area 8 - Bridgwater

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Bridgwater	Bridgwater East and Bawdrip ED
Bridgwater Without	Bridgwater North and Central ED
	Bridgwater West ED
	Bridgwater South ED

LCN Area 9 - Yeovil

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Barwick and Stoford	Brympton ED
Brympton	Castle Cary ED
Chilthorne Domer	Coker ED
Chilton Cantelo	Martock ED
East Coker	Yeovil Central ED
Ilchester	Yeovil East ED
Limington	Yeovil South ED
Marston Magna	Yeovil West ED
Mudford	
Rimpton	
Stoke sub Hamdon	
Tintinhull	
West Camel	
West Coker	
Yeovil	
Yeovil Without	
Yeovilton	

LCN Area 10 - Wincanton

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Abbas and Templecombe	Blackmoor Vale ED
Alford	Castle Cary ED
Ansford	Mendip South ED
Babcary	Wincanton and Bruton ED
Bratton Seymour	
Brewham	
Bruton	
Castle Cary	
Charlton Horethorne	
Charlton Musgrove	
Compton Pauncefoot	
Corton Denham	
Cucklington	
Henstridge	
Holton	
Horsington	
Lamyatt	
Lovington	
Lydford-on-Fosse	
Maperton	
Milborne Port	
North Barrow	
North Cadbury	
North Cheriton	
Pen Selwood	
Pitcombe	
Queen Camel	
Shepton Montague	
South Barrow	
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	
Sparkford	
Stoke Trister	
Wincanton	
Yarlington	

LCN Area 11 – Crewkerne and Ilminster

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Broadway	Coker ED
Chaffcombe	Crewkerne ED
Chillington	Ilminster ED
Chiselborough	South Petherton and Isle Moor ED
Closworth	
Crewkerne	
Cricket St. Thomas	
Cudworth	
Dinnington	
Donyatt	
Dowlish Wake	
East Chinnock	
Hardington Mandeville	
Haselbury Plucknett	
Hinton St. George	
Horton	
Ilminster	
Ilton	
Kingstone	
Knowle St. Giles	
Lopen	
Merriott	
Misterton	
Montacute	
North Perrott	
Norton sub Hamdon	
Odcombe	
Seavington St. Mary	
Seavington St. Michael	
Shepton Beauchamp	
South Petherton	
Stocklinch	
Wayford	
West and Middle Chinnock	
West Crewkerne	
Winsham	
Whitelackington	

LCN Area 12 - Wellington and Wiveliscombe

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Ashbrittle	Blackdown and Neroche ED
Bathealton	Upper Tone ED
Bradford-on-Tone	Wellington ED
Chipstable	
Fitzhead	
Halse	
Langford Budville	
Milverton	
Nynehead	
Oake	
Sampford Arundel	
Stawley	
Wellington	
Wellington Without	
West Buckland	
Wiveliscombe	

LCN Area 13 - Minehead and Watchet

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Ash Priors	Dunster ED
Bicknoller	Lydeard ED
Carhampton	Minehead ED
Combe Florey	Watchet and Stogursey ED
Crowcombe	
Dunster	
East Quantoxhead	
Elworthy	
Lydeard St. Lawrence	
Minehead	
Monksilver	
Nettlecombe	
Old Cleeve	
Sampford Brett	
Stogumber	
Tolland	
Watchet	
West Bagborough	
West Quantoxhead	
Williton	
Withycombe	

LCN Area 14 - Dowsborough

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Cannington	Bridgwater West ED
Chilton Trinity	Cannington ED
Durleigh	Watchet and Stogursey ED
Enmore	
Fiddington	
Goathurst	
Holford	
Kilve	
Nether Stowey	
Otterhampton	
Over Stowey	
Spaxton	
Stockland Bristol	
Stogursey	
Stringston	
Wemdbon	

LCN Area 15 - Hestercombe

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Broomfield	Monkton and North Curry ED
Cheddon Fitzpaine	North Petherton ED
Creech St. Michael	Rowbarton and Staplegrove ED
Durston	Taunton North ED
Kingston St Mary	
North Petherton	
Thurloxton	
West Monkton	

LCN Area 16 – Levels and Moors

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Aller	
Ash	
Barrington	
Beercrocombe	Bridgwater East and Bawdrip ED
Burrowbridge	Curry Rivel and Langport ED
Chedzoy	King Alfred ED
Compton Dundon	Martock ED
Curry Mallet	Monkton and North Curry ED
Curry Rivel	North Petherton ED
Drayton	Somerton ED
Fivehead	South Petherton and Islemoor ED
Hambridge and Westport	
High Ham	
Huish Episcopi	
Isle Abbots	
Isle Brewers	
Kingsbury Episcopi	
Kingsdon	
Langport	
Long Load	
Long Sutton	
Lyng	
Martock	
Middlezoy	
Muchelney	
North Curry	
Othery	
Pitney	
Puckington	
Somerton	
Stoke St. Gregory	
The Charltons	
Westonzoyland	

LCN Area 18 - Chard and Blackdowns

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Ashill	Blackdown and Neroche ED
Bickenhall	Chard North ED
Buckland St. Mary	Chard South ED
Chard Town	Ilminster ED
Churchstanton	
Combe St. Nicholas	
Corfe	
Curland	
Hatch Beauchamp	
Orchard Portman	
Otterford	
Pitminster	
Ruishton	
Staple Fitzpaine	
Stoke St. Mary	
Tatworth and Forton	
Thornfalcon	
Wambrook	
West Hatch	
Whitestaunton	

LCN Area 17 - Avalon and Poldens

Parishes	Electoral Divisions
Ashcott	Bridgwater East and Bawdrip ED
Baltonsborough	ED
Barton St. David	Glastonbury ED
Bawdrip	Huntspill ED
Burtle	King Alfred ED
Butleigh	Mendip South ED
Catcott	Mendip West ED
Chilton Polden	Somerton ED
Cossington	Street ED
Edington	
Glastonbury	
Greinton	
Keinton Mandeville	
Kingweston	
Meare & Westhay	
Moorlinch	
Shapwick	
Sharpham	
Stawell	
Street	
Walton	
West Bradley	
West Pennard	

Part E - Local Community Networks

Terms of Reference

The Council will establish 18 Local Community Networks to promote the development of stronger and more resilient communities across Somerset.

For the purposes of the Constitution, the Local Community Networks will be classed as Area Boards.

1.0 Purpose, Role and Function of the Local Community Networks

1.1 The purpose of the Local Community Networks are to be the focus for community development, engagement and partnership working at a local level; improving outcomes for residents and establishing strong connections between the Council, our communities and our partners.

1.2 The Local Community Networks will have the following roles and functions:

- Establishing effective local community engagement and influence;
- Promote enhanced participation in democracy, active community decision making and scrutiny;
- Enhance collaboration by bringing together at a local level representatives from partner organisations, City, town and parish councils, community groups and others
- Ensure local influence over the Council and wider public service activity;
- Share information, ideas and solutions to enable services to be delivered to help meet local need;
- To inspire more responsibility for local place shaping;
- To identify evidence-based community priorities; across Economic, Social and Environmental issues;
- To create plans to reflect how the priorities will be addressed; and
- To identify and secure resource opportunities for local projects

2.0 Local Community Networks Approach

2.1 The Local Community Networks will:

- a) Agree priorities and areas of focus for the local area on an annual basis
- b) Agree a tailored communication and engagement plan for actively involving residents and other local stakeholders

- c) Allocate any funding obtained by the Local Community Network as appropriate, and in accordance with rules and guidance set out by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders
- d) Provide opportunities to ensure that the local community is able to respond to consultations in a timely manner.
- e) Provide opportunities to ensure good communications and information from Somerset Council, and partners, on local issues.
- f) Make recommendations to Somerset Council and/or other partners on funding local projects.
- g) Make recommendations to Somerset Council, and partners, on key local issues.
- h) Produce an annual report with a self-assessment of success in relation to delivery against the agreed priorities and areas of focus for the local area for the past 12 months.
- i) Hold an annual meeting to enable residents and local stakeholders to input into setting area priorities for the next 12 months and highlight local issues.

3.0 Composition

- 3.1 The Local Community Networks will be constituted as Area Boards. The minutes of the meetings of all Local Community Networks, along with any recommendations, will be considered by the Executive.
- 3.2 In the event of a Somerset Council Councillor being elected following a by-election, the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to appoint the Councillor to the relevant Local Community Network and Council will be asked to ratify the appointment at its next available ordinary meeting.
- 3.3 Local Community Networks are established for 18 areas covering the county. Any changes to the names of the LCNs or their boundaries will need to be recommended to the Executive Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity for approval.

4.0 Policy and Constitution

- 4.1 Local Community Networks must operate within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.
- 4.2 Each Local Community Network may receive funding as determined from time to time by the Council, partners or through successful funding bids. Local Community Networks will allocate any funds in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules.

- 4.3 Local Community Networks will be consulted on the development of strategic policies to make sure that local priorities and concerns are taken into account. The Local Community Networks will also be consulted where significant changes, reductions or closures of a service are planned in their local area.
- 4.4 Any key decision or policy proposal of the Council that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact in the local area will be discussed with the Local Community Network.
- 4.5 Where appropriate, Local Community Networks are able to set up Working Groups to cover particular topics. The results and outcomes from the Working Group will need to be fed back to the main meeting of the Local Community Network.
- 4.6 In the event of the topic spanning more than one Local Community Network area, the Working Group will be set up to include representatives from all appropriate Local Area Networks.
- 5.0 Membership & Representation
- 5.1 Each Local Community Network will comprise of the following core membership:
- 1) The elected Somerset Council Councillors representing the electoral divisions covered by the Local Community Network;
 - 2) A member from each City, Town or Parish Council and Parish Meeting within the area covered by the Local Community Network;
 - 3) Representatives from the following groups or organisations:
 - a) Local Neighbourhood policing team;
 - b) Somerset National Health Service
 - c) Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service;
 - d) Education
 - e) Representatives from Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Organisations
 - f) Representatives from Businesses or Trade Groups
 - g) Others as may be considered locally important
- 5.2 The Executive Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity will approve the core membership of each LCN. Each LCN will review their core membership at their first Annual Meeting and then at least annually and make any recommendations for changes to the Executive Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity. The core

membership list will be classed as the voting members of the Local Community Network.

- 5.3 Each Local Community Network will support and encourage wider participation and engagement from additional attendees. This could include, for example:
- Local Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations
 - Local Businesses or Trade Groups
 - Housing Associations or Housing Officers
 - Any other relevant local groups which could include youth groups, cultural organisations, environmental groups, older people's groups, disability groups, etc.

6.0 Other representation

6.1 Local Community Networks can invite any Executive Member to attend their meeting to discuss matters relating to their remit, if appropriate.

6.2 Invited Executive Members attending the Local Community Network as a guest will not have voting rights.

6.3 For the avoidance of doubt an Executive Member is entitled to vote as a standing Member of the Local Community Network in which their electoral division is located.

7.0 Officer Support

7.1 Each Local Community Network will be supported by a dedicated Officer from the Unitary Council and Democratic Services Officer(s).

7.2 Local Community Networks can ask other officers (including external partners officers) to attend their meetings to discuss items of business on their agenda.

7.3 Somerset Council Directors will provide an oversight role for the Local Community Networks, ensuring that officers in their directorates attend and engage with the LCNs as and when appropriate.

8.0 Order of business for the Annual Meeting of the Local Community Networks

8.1 The date and meeting arrangements for the first Annual Meeting for each Local Community Network shall be agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity. The Annual Meeting of the Local Community Networks will take

place annually based on the commencement date of the Local Community Network.

8.2 Items of business for the Local Community Network Annual Meeting will be:

- a) To elect the Chair of the Local Community Network
- b) To appoint the Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network
- c) To receive any apologies for absence
- d) Declarations of Interest
- e) Public Question Time
- f) Approve the minutes from the previous meeting
- g) To consider the Annual Report on the Local Community Network's work in the last 12 months
- h) To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the Local Community Network for the next 12 months
- i) To consider any other business set out in the agenda
- j) To agree the frequency of meetings
- k) To agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

9.0 Order of business for Ordinary meetings of the Local Community Networks

9.1 Items of business for the ordinary meetings of the Local Community Networks will be:

- a) To receive any apologies for absence
- b) Declarations of Interest
- c) Public Question Time
- d) To approve the minutes from the previous meeting
- e) To receive updates on any action points from previous meeting(s)
- f) To consider any other business set out in the agenda

10.0 Process for electing the Chair of the Local Community Networks

10.1 Only members of the core membership are eligible to be nominated as the Chair. Either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network shall be a Somerset Council Councillor.

10.2 Election will take place annually at the Annual Meeting of the Local Community Network.

10.3 The Democratic Services Officer will call for nominations for the position of Chair of the Local Community Network.

- 10.4 Only voting members can make nominations. The nomination must be seconded to be valid.
- 10.5 An individual shall not be nominated in their absence without their written consent.
- 10.6 In the event of only one valid nomination being received, the person presiding will declare the nominated member elected.
- 10.7 In the event of two valid nominations, the Democratic Services Officer will ask for a show of hands for those members in favour of each nominated candidate and declare the candidate receiving the majority of votes (of the core membership present and voting) to be the winner.
- 10.8 In the case of an equal number of votes for the two candidates, a random electronic generator will be used by the Democratic Services Officer to determine the winner of the election and then declare the result.
- 10.9 In the case of three or more valid nominations being made, the Democratic Services Officer will call for a show of hands for each of the candidates. The Democratic Services Officer will then announce the candidate with the least number of votes and that candidate will be eliminated (in the event of a tie for the least number of votes, the Democratic Services Officer will use a random electronic generator to determine which candidate will be eliminated). A further vote shall be taken for the remaining candidates and after each vote the candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated until only two candidates remain and a final vote can be taken (following section 10.7 and 10.8 above).
- 10.10 The Chair and Vice-Chair will hold office until the next Annual Meeting unless they resign from the position. In the event of a resignation, an election for the Chair and/or Vice-Chair will take place at the next available meeting.
- 11.0 Chairing arrangements
- 11.1 The Vice-Chair will preside in the absence of the Chair and if neither is present, the Local Community Network will appoint a Chair from among its core membership (section 5.1) for that respective meeting.
- 11.2 The role of the Chair will include:

- a) Providing leadership to ensure that the objectives of the Local Community Networks are met.
- b) Ensuring that the voices of the local community are at the heart of the work of the Local Community Networks.
- c) Working with Officers to set the agendas and to ensure that any action points are picked up and dealt with
- d) Chair the meetings effectively to ensure that its business can be carried out efficiently and that all parties have an opportunity to input
- e) Ensure that the meeting is a forum for debate of matters of interest and/or concern to the local community
- f) Represent the Local Community Network at the quarterly meetings with the Executive Member and Scrutiny Chair(s)
- g) Produce an annual report on behalf of the Local Community Network which will be considered by the Executive

12.0 Local Community Network links to the democratic process

This section will set out how the Local Community Networks will link to the democratic process within Somerset Council.

Council

- 12.1 Somerset Council will review the Terms of Reference for the Local Community Networks at its Annual Meeting each year.

Executive

- 12.3 Local Community Networks can escalate issues of concern to the Executive and/or the relevant Executive Member.
- 12.4 There will be a standing item on Executive agendas to consider and note any minutes from Local Community Network meetings that have taken place. This will include any recommendations that the Local Community Network wish the Executive to consider.
- 12.5 The Executive will also consider the Local Community Network annual report.
- 12.6 The Executive Member with remit for Local Community Networks will meet on a quarterly basis with the Local Community Network Chairs so that common themes and issues can be discussed. The Scrutiny Committee(s) Chairs are also included in this meeting.

Scrutiny Committee(s)

- 12.7 Wherever possible the Scrutiny Committee(s) will avoid duplicating the work of the Local Community Networks.
- 12.8 However, issues of local concern may be identified and added to the Scrutiny workplan via the quarterly meetings with the Executive Member and Local Community Network Chairs.

Planning

- 12.9 Planning matters that fall under the remit of the Planning Committee or Planning Sub-Committees will be out of scope of the Local Community Networks to avoid duplication.

Licensing and Regulatory

- 12.10 Licensing and Regulatory matters that fall under the remit of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and Regulatory Sub-Committee will be out of scope of the Local Community Networks to avoid duplication.

13.0 Voting

- 13.1 Local Community Networks will seek to reach decisions by consensus where possible, involving the core membership (listed in section 5.1). Prior to such a decision, the Chair may upon their discretion take an indicative vote of the representatives set out in section 5.3.
- 13.2 However, on the occasions where a formal decision needs to be made this will be recommended to the Somerset Council Executive for consideration.
- 13.3 Where a vote is required then this will be by a show of hands of the voting membership present.
- 13.4 Where the vote is tied, the Chair of the Local Community Network shall have a second or casting vote.

14.0 Quorum

- 14.1 Quorum will be 30% of the core membership (section 5.1).

15.0 Meeting frequency and location

15.1 Local Community Networks will meet 6-8 times a year, however this is at the discretion of each individual LCN.

15.2 Local Community Network meetings will be held in accessible venues and will be held in various locations within the local area (dependent on the numbers likely to attend the meeting).

16.0 Access to Information

16.1 Local Community Networks are subject to the Access to Information Rules set out in Part B of this Constitution.

16.2 For example:

- a) Agendas will be published on the Council website 5 clear days before the meeting
- b) Meetings will be open to members of the public and press
- c) Draft minutes will be published on the Council website within 5 working days following the meeting

17.0 Standards of Behaviour and Conduct

17.1 Somerset Council Councillors are subject to the Members Code of Conduct set out in section Y of this Constitution.

17.2 City, Town and Parish Councillors are reminded that they have been elected to the Local Community Network as a representative of their Council, and therefore should follow their Code of Conduct.

17.3 Local Community Network meeting attendees will at all times follow the Protocol on meeting etiquette.

18.0 Review of the Terms of Reference

18.1 The Terms of Reference for the Local Community Networks will be reviewed on an annual basis and agreed at the Somerset Council Annual Meeting. This is to ensure that the Terms of Reference appropriately reflect the role of the Local Community Networks as they evolve over time.

**Minutes of the Exmoor LCN Pilot Highways Subgroup
Held on Friday 10 February 2023,
At Withypool Village Hall from 10.00am – 1.30pm**

Present:

Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)	SCC/SWT
Andrew Turner	SCC
Luke Green	SCC
Bev Norman	SCC
Kate Brown	SCC
Craig Gowan	SCC
Steve Marsh	SCC
Mike Ellicott	Vice Chairman Exmoor Panel
Christine Dubery	Dulverton Town Council
Sarah Buchanan	Brompton Regis (Brendon Rep)
Andrew Bray	(Vale Rep)
Roger Webber	(Moor Rep)
Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe PC
Patrick Watts-Mabbott	Exmoor National Park (ENP)
Sam Murrell (Project Officer)	SCC/SWT

1 Apologies

Margaret Rawle (Dulverton), Cllr Frances Nicholson, Jeremy Hickman (Exford), No representatives from Milestone were in attendance.

The Chair introduced Patrick Watts-Mabbott to the group and said that he was attending to observe and offer insight in how the volunteers he oversees may be able to help with the Highways Project. Patrick has responsibility for the maintenance and management of the Exmoor Fingerpost project on Exmoor.

2 To review the Minutes and Action Points of the previous meeting on Friday 9 December 2022.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. Matters arising: -

- **Exford Bridge Silting**

Unfortunately, a lot of the vegetation which is causing the problem was unable to be cut due to the height of the river. It is hoped that the team will return now that the water is lower. The silt can only be removed in the summer, and budgets are very tight, but the Bridges Team are undertaking all preparatory work in case funding can be found. The work within the river is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and Exford Parish Council are finding them to be uncooperative in their response to the problem.

The tree that was blocking one of the arches because of the recent highwater event, was removed by Exford villagers. SCC Bridges team have been out and removed logjams from all the bridges where trees were reported following the recent flooding. Can any further incidents

please be reported to the Bridges@somerset.gov.uk team, to ensure a swift response.

- **Update on the Exford Road Slippage aka The Ravine**

The Bridges Team are leading on this, and the contractor has carried out and completed the exploratory bore hole drilling, to determine the core of the ravine. 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 bore hole information is assessed and the programme of works is determined, parishes will be consulted on the best time to undertake the reparations. Following on from this, it was agreed that a public meeting would be held to let residents know what would be happening. It is hoped that the work to be undertaken which is likely to be embankment reconstruction and sheet piling would be quick to complete, but a full road closure would be necessary. It was hoped that this would happen in May to take advantage of the longer day light hours.

It was queried that the adjacent landowners to the highway still had concerns that nobody had contacted them to discuss what was happening. One of the landowners also has a private water supply nearby and was worried that any works would affect the water to their property. **Action Point** – Andrew Turner to follow up.

3. Scheme Promotion / Review and Update

3.1 Drainage Schemes – Craig Gowan

The drainage work scheduled to be undertaken on the B3188 was unlikely to be delivered in the current financial year. This was being re-booked for the 2023/34 budget.

Shearwells – Highway Maintenance (RF)

Roger Foxwell reported that the Highways Maintenance team had now successfully cleared the drains at Shearwells, Cutcombe of tarmac. Sam Murrell stated that this demonstrated the usefulness of parish online which had allowed her to map the identified drains, so that the team could go straight to site and clear them.

Luckwell Bridge – Collapsed Drain (RF)

Roger Foxwell reported that the roadside drain at Luckwell Bridge had been jetted, but then unfortunately collapsed. (This is in the ditch beside the highway). This will need to be reported to the Highways Team for investigation.

B3224 – Silt traps at Long Lane (RF)

These are blocked and need addressing. They do not appear to be on the Highways Maintenance work sheet, so will need to be added if the responsibility of SCC.

3.2 Resurfacing / Surface Dressing – Craig Gowan

A39 Tivington – Road Closure

The road closure would take place between the hours of 9.00am – 3.30pm to allow school buses passage through the work. The Coaster bus service would be affected but the service operator is already aware of the fact and would likely deviate the service.

All hauliers, transport operators, businesses and shop owners will be informed about the works at least a fortnight before the resurfacing is due to take place. Porlock Parish Council will also have advance notice.

It is envisioned that the preparatory works will take place under signals during the day, and the resurfacing will happen at night. Signage with diversions via Exford will be sited early enough for drivers to take the appropriate routes.

Signage – It is very important that the signs make it clear where the road closure comes into effect. This is especially important regarding the A39 Porlock Hill / Redway drainage scheme so as not to “close off Porlock”. In the past this has happened as traffic has bypassed the village. It is important that the businesses are not adversely affected. It was agreed that the yellow diversion signs need to contain more information.

3.3 Grass and Hedge Cutting

3.3.1 Selworthy / Wootton Courtenay – chase about additional cut

The cutting schedules have now been drawn up and will commence during the first week of May. All cutting will be undertaken by a local contractor. Selworthy and Wootton Courtenay parishes, requested a 6ft cut in certain areas and were going to submit a map identifying those roads. Parish Online would be a good tool for this.

Parishes were reminded that if additional cuts were required the devolved funding could be used to pay for this. Highways would meet their statutory obligation from a safety point of view, but if additional cuts were required for aesthetic reasons, then this would need to be funded separately.

Private landowners are responsible for maintaining hedges on their own properties, but some are reluctant to undertake the work. The parish representatives present stated they did not like to confront the landowners in their community because it sometimes led to bad feeling with their neighbours. It was suggested that SCC could undertake the work and then invoice the landowner if they did not address the issue and where safety on the highway was compromised. Andrew Turner said this could be done, but it was a final solution only, when all persuasion had failed.

In the new Somerset Council, the street sweeping contract will be combined into the programme and this will make it easier to liaise on general maintenance issues.

3.4 Traffic Management Schemes – Kate Brown

3.4.1 Cutcombe - Extension of 20mph reduction in speed (TRO)

The publishing of the proposal to implement the speed limit has received some opposition and a FOI request. The detailed plans have been sent to the parish council, and the formal consultation is now taking place. If no objections are received then the implementation will be sometime around June/July. It is a lengthy process, but this is due to the statutory requirements.

3.4.2 Exford Speed Indicator Devices (SID)

The new post for the SID has been put in place and the SID is working well. The white lining road markings did not get completed at Combe Lane due to parked cars blocking access. It was requested that if SCC could give 24 hours' notice to the parish then steps would be taken to ask the owners to remove their vehicles. There was also some lining missed on the road alongside the Village Hall. The tweaking of the 20mph speed limit and proposed extensions are being worked on. Kate Brown will need to visit the site again and agree extents and where posts can be sited and then the TRO will be advertised. (This will take a few months).

3.4.3 A39 Tivington / Selworthy

Reduction in the speed limit to 50mph at the request of Luccombe and Selworthy PCs. There were no objections to the proposal and work is due to go ahead at the same time as the road re-surfacing to minimise disruption.

3.4.4 Brompton Regis / Signage at the Ford

Traffic Management are looking to implement some better signage for tourists to divert traffic away from the Ford. This should provide earlier advance warning, so that visitors can take a detour around it. The works order will be submitted in April. A depth gauge has also been suggested but there is no historical information to support the fact that there has been one on site previously.

3.4.5 Dulverton – Various

- White Lining that was missed.
- **Bollard outside Acorn Antiques** – This request has been denied due to the pavement being too narrow. An alternative traffic solution needs to be found.
- **Jury Road** – The Town Council is currently communicating with residents in the hope that they can deter high sided vehicles from parking and blocking sight lines. “Nobody wants to resort to Yellow Lines!”
- **Amory Road** – is an extension of double yellow lines which will be advertised on the next amendment order in the spring/summer and if no objections then lines will be put down. The other location is Lady Street which was around cars parking in a narrow section and the fire

engine struggling to get through. There is a reluctance to prohibit parked cars as this will be detrimental to the residents and holiday cottages. The lining audit will address these issues.

3.5 Public Utilities (Luke Green)

3.5.1 The location of diversion signs has now been addressed and put on the one.network. Statutory Undertakers must refer to this when carrying out their duties.

3.5.2 Openreach would be undertaking some work on the highway at **Exford** either side of the “ravine” which would necessitate a 2-3hour road closure for heavy vehicles. This was to erect 2 telegraph poles and was essential work. It would be carried out over 2 days between the hours of 10:30am-1.30pm to avoid school and commuter traffic. It was asked that all communications were sent out early so residents could plan accordingly!

3.5.3 Wessex Water would be carrying out sewer relining in **Porlock**, which would necessitate a road closure. More information would be communicated once known.

3.5.4 Jury Road, Dulverton – Christine Dubery expressed concern about the work due to take place at Jury Road, which required a road closure as this was the service road for the local GP, dentist and school. It would have to be planned sensibly so that access to those businesses was not prevented.

3.5.5 Cutcombe – The works that had been carried out by Wessex Water Authority 18 months ago were now finally being corrected by the Highways Team. They were bringing the surface back to a Highways Standard, but it had taken a long time to correct.

Question from Mike Ellicott

What inspections are carried out to determine whether completed utility works have been returned to a highway’s standard?

This provoked a general discussion on the importance of reporting sub-standard work. Once the contractor has completed their operations, it is guaranteed for a period of 18 months. It is therefore important that any concerns are reported back to Highways as early as possible to get them to return and make good. Unfortunately, there are not enough inspectors throughout Somerset to check every single utilities task, so parishes being vigilant will assist the Highways Team in their work. Once the 18 months has lapsed the responsibility to make good, then falls on the Highway Authority.

There are other methods being trialled in the event of the work not meeting the required standard, such as payments being with-held, and penalties being imposed.

SCC Highways are also currently reviewing their departmental structure and ways of working, to bolster the inspection and client side of the business.

4. Winter Maintenance

Update on the current situation – Andrew Turner

There have been various issues brought to light over preceding weeks concerning the gritting of red and green routes. It was clear that the contractor was not meeting the minimum obligation as laid out in the winter programme of works. The contractor has been unable to resource the green routes, and this was unacceptable. The contractor has been put on notice that the level of service is below the recognised standard and expectation. The main reason for the lack of salting/gritting appears to be a reduction in manpower. (The contractor currently employs 61 operatives whereas previously they had 82).

Green routes are not being gritted and this is impacting on communities and is causing reputational damage to SCC. There had also been occasions when even red (essential) routes had not been gritted and roads had been summarily closed forcing cars on to even less safe highways!

Contractors are measured on output, not on the method so it is not just about the use and operation of gritter lorries. Other methods of distribution may need to be employed.

The contractor is being instructed to meet the requirements of the contract as there is possibly still another 6 weeks of bad weather still to come. Liaison is ongoing to ensure the incremental process of monitoring is being applied, which could ultimately lead to a breach of contract if improvement is not made.

All concerns about gritting (or the lack thereof) need to be reported to the countyroads-westsom@somersetgov.uk soon as possible.

Rights of Way Maintenance in ENP

ENP is currently provided with a budget from SCC to contribute towards the Exmoor National Park Rights of Way. If the money is not forthcoming in the new financial year, then ENP will most likely hand the responsibility back to the new Somerset Council.

5. Devolved Funding

5.1 An update on the current position.

Green schemes were progressing: -

5.1 Bev Norman and Sam had a conversation about payment of the Brompton Regis Traffic Management survey. This should have been processed internally and the money transferred without the need to send a separate invoice.

5.2 Jetting – A list of schemes has now been compiled. A comprehensive map of the drains in Dulverton had been supplied by Margaret Rawle, and this would be used as a “test case” to determine value for money, before opening further. Sam Murrell

requested the names of local jetting operatives who could be approached to price for the work. Kevin Bridgwater had also supplied a specification on the required standard of work.

5.3 Grit bins – These had now been delivered to the depot and would be distributed by the Highways Steward in the coming weeks. Sam would be arranging with the clerks about a suitable liaison and dropping off point. It would also be a good way for Tim Williams to get to know the Exmoor communities. Once on site, the parishes would need to arrange for the grit bins to be filled. Brompton Regis (Sarah Buchanan and Cllr Frances Nicholson) had undertaken an audit of the grit bins because some had gone missing! There was also difficulty in getting the bins filled, especially if they weren't completely empty.

Once the bins have been delivered the parishes would need to email countyroads-westsom@somerset.gov.uk to arrange for filling.

5.4 Budget for 2023/24 – Andrew Turner explained that he was hoping to earmark some of next years budget to fund the continuation of the highways project. There were concerns however about the 38million predicted budget deficit and the resulting cuts that may need to be implemented.

One suggestion within the budget was to remove the provision of filling Grit Bins and ask the parishes to resource this themselves. Concern was expressed that parishes had already set their precepts and had made no account for this, and it would impact on the safety of communities on Exmoor. The Subgroup felt very strongly on the detrimental impact this would have on the parishes, the highways pilot and ultimately the Local Community Network. There had been little or no consultation, and most were unaware that this was implied. It was suggested that it might be prudent for parishes to write to Cllr Mike Rigby (Executive Councillor for Transportation at SCC) to lobby their concern. The budget would be agreed by SCC for the new Somerset Council on Wednesday 22nd February, so time was relatively short to respond.

6. Highway Steward (Andrew Turner)

6.1 Update on Highway Steward Scheme

Tim Williams was now in post and was catching up on the work that was outstanding from December and January. There was a slight delay due to the original applicant deciding to turn down the job just as he was about to begin. Following on from induction and training, Tim was now familiarising himself with the district and the cyclical tasks on the worksheet.

6.2 Update on Programme

It was agreed that it would be useful for him to meet Sean – the parish lengthsman. Sam has scheduled this into his work planner to liaise with the Dulverton Clerk (Mandy Rose), so that he can work it into routine works whilst in the area.

It is also planned to have more liaison between the Highway Steward and the SCC Highways Superintendents in the future. This will identify the gaps where the Highways Steward encounters problems which he can't tackle, and his concerns can be passed on more quickly. Sam Murrell now has access to the work planner and has more oversight to enable this. It may also mean that some works are referred to the parish clerk who will need to log the issue on the defects portal. (This would happen if the work required is deemed too technical for a single operative, or some additional traffic management is needed).

It was agreed to remind parishes that the Highway Steward is available and what works he is equipped to undertake. It is also important that work request forms clearly log where the issues are so that time isn't wasted trying to find specific locations. It would be useful to log drains and such using What3Words or provide a map. (parish online).

7. Parish Online

Sam Murrell queried when the free trial period would end, because some parishes were now starting to query whether they would have to meet the cost if they wished to keep it. Andrew Turner agreed to follow this up and come back with an answer.

Christine Dubery asked about training and the parish online user group takes place every Friday afternoon. It is free to participate, and users can drop in and out of the session as required. Please [click here](#) to go to the timetable and book your place.

8. Recommendations to the Exmoor Area Panel

None at the present time.

9 A.O.B

- **ENP Finger post volunteers** - Patrick Watts-Mabbott introduced himself and explained that his volunteer operatives were Chapter 8 trained to allow them to work on the Highway. They could be called upon to assist with projects although they may need help with sourcing the relevant equipment.
- **Adoption of the Exmoor LCN** – The Exmoor Pilot area has been formally adopted and recognised by the Local Government Reorganisation Team. This means that the current valuable work of the Highways Pilot can continue. Cllr Pugsley is also keen that the Area Panel model morphs into the work and terms of reference of the LCN governance arrangements. As such the March meeting will be the last of the Exmoor Area Panel, and the first of the Exmoor Local Community Network Committee.
- **Venues and timings of future meetings**
Sam has contacted all the clerks in the current Exmoor Division asking what facilities are available in their parishes to enable meetings to take place. The venues must be accessible, available and affordable. A good response has been received. Once a budget has been identified, Sam will be diarising meetings for the forthcoming municipal year.
- **Satisfaction surveys and feedback**

These have been circulated. Understandably there was rather a luke-warm response at the end of Qtr3 to the services of the Highway Steward, due to no service being provided in December. Overall, with one anomaly the service seems to be well received by parishes. It was decided to remove the anonymity from the forms, so that dissatisfaction and negative comments can be followed up. It will also prevent duplication.

- An invitation has been extended to Val Keitch to attend the last official Exmoor Area Panel meeting. Frances Gully and other members of the LCN consultation team are also planning on attending, as is Nicola Dawson from Somerset Prepared.
- Andrew Turner and Steve Marsh are producing a report about the Exmoor Pilot which will go before the Local Government Reorganisation Committee. It will cover such themes as “what works and what doesn’t?”, officer capacity and lessons learnt. It will shape how the other LCNs will develop, and how the Highways pilot will be rolled out across Somerset.

10. Dates and Venues for meetings going forward

Exmoor Panel Date	Proposed Highways Sub-Group Date
16 March 2023	10 February 2023

Meeting closed at 13:40

