

## **Local Community Network Meeting Notes**

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Frome

Date: Thursday, 27 July 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.40 pm

Location: Frome Town Council Town Hall - Frome

Chaired by: Frome Town Councillor Max Wide

### **LCN core membership attendance:**

Councillor Adam Boyden, Frome North Division  
Councillor Barry Clarke, Mendip Central and East Division - online  
Councillor Dawn Denton, Frome North Division - online  
Councillor Philip Ham, Mendip Central and East Division  
Councillor Helen Kay, Frome East Division  
Councillor Claire Sully, Mendip South Division  
Berkley Parish Councillor Andrew Knight  
Buckland Dinham Parish Councillor Sarah Barnett  
Frome Town Councillor Max Wide  
Mells Parish Councillor Karen Punter  
Norton St Philip Parish Councillor Ian Hasell  
Nunney Parish Councillor Sally Foster

### **Officer attendance:**

Kate Hellard, Lead Officer, Somerset Council Staff  
Sara Skirton, Service Director, Somerset Council Staff  
Chris Taylor, LCN Team, Somerset Council Staff  
Terena Isaacs, LCN Team, Somerset Council Staff  
Claire Dicken, DS Team, Somerset Council Staff  
Richard Selwyn, Children's Somerset Services, Council Staff

**Other attendees:**

Berkley Parish Councillor Helen Atkins  
Paul Wynne, Frome Town Council Clerk  
Frome Town Council Leader Lisa Merryweather  
Norton St Philip Parish Councillor Barbi Lund  
Norton St Philip Parish Councillor Val Fox  
Norton St Philip Parish Councillor Catriona Murfitt  
Nunney Parish Councillor Bill Stock  
Karen Clayson, People for Packsaddle  
Nicola Cretney, People for Packsaddle  
Jackie Wheeler, People for Packsaddle

**Virtual attendees:**

Wanstrow Parish Councillor Michael Gay  
Selwood Parish Councillor Chris Bennett  
Emma Plummer, Somerset Council Staff  
Ally Laing, Somerset Council Staff

**Welcome:**

Frome Town Councillor Max Wide asked everyone in the room and online to introduce themselves.

He went on to outline the purpose of the Local Community Networks. They were to be the focus for the new Somerset Council for community engagement and development, within an ethos of local partnership working, looking to improve outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and our partners.

He explained the LCN had already been meeting for 18 months. From now on the network would be part of the Somerset Council's structure. As a result, Somerset Council Members had already put together a proposed structure for the LCN Frome Area (the LCN) going forward. They proposed a Chair, Max Wide, and a number of vice chairs who together would form a Steering Group made up of a number of Somerset Councillors namely Dawn Denton, Adam Boyden, Helen Kay and Claire Sully. The Steering Group would meet regularly to co-

ordinate the progress of the LCN discussions thus ensuring top priorities were agreed and taken forward. The group would remain open to new members who would like to join in the task of designing the operation of the network.

## **Summary of discussion:**

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

#### **Item 1: To elect the Chair of the Local Community Network**

Frome Town Councillor Max Wide was nominated by Councillor Adam Boyden, seconded by Somerset Councillor Helen Kay.

There were no other nominations.

Frome Town Councillor Max Wide was duly elected of the Local Community Network – Frome Area.

He thanked the network for electing him. He said he had enjoyed being part of building the network thus far. He said it was very important and he looked forward to creating a network which worked for everyone in the area including the villages, not just Frome Town.

He hoped meetings in the future might be themed in line with the priorities in the LCN Plan.

He said he had a background in local government and facilitation. However, he said he wanted to break free from a formal committee structure, covering all that needed to be covered but in a less formal, workshop style.

He said the network was in a good position to have a great deal of influence on local issues and could report directly to the Somerset Council.

Item 2: **To elect the Vice Chair of the Local Community Network**

Councillor Adam Boyden was nominated by Councillor Claire Sully, seconded by Councillor Helen Kay.

There were no other nominations.

Councillor Adam Boyden was duly elected as the named Vice Chair of the Local Community Network – Frome Area.

He thanked the network for electing him. And he looked forward to working with Councillors Dawn Denton, Helen Kay and Claire Sully on the new Steering Group.

Item 3: **Apologies for Absence**

Somerset Councillor Michael Dunk (Core Member)  
Vicar Ian Snares, Holy Trinity Church, Frome (Core Member)  
Karen Leafe, Spark Somerset (Core Member)  
Somerset Councillor Val Keitch  
Somerset Councillor Alex Wiltshire (Core Member)  
Somerset Councillor Martin Dimery (Core Member)  
Buckland Dinham Parish Councillor John Reckless  
Nunney Parish Councillors Simon Clegg and Paul White.

Item 4: **Declarations of Interest**

None.

Item 5: **Public Question Time**

Jackie Wheeler from the community group called People for Packsaddle was invited to speak. She said the group had in the region of 200 members. Their aim was to save 8 acres of green space in the north of Frome. She said People for Packsaddle had a vision for the green space. She asked if the LCN could help them with discussions to get the land devolved from the Somerset Council to Frome Town Council.

The Chair thanked the speaker. He said, in the first instance, LCN, would be establishing its main priorities on wider issues.

LCN was a good place to raise issues of local concern. In this instance, he suggested that devolution to Frome Town Council was a matter for that Council who the group could approach directly.

In the discussion that followed one Somerset Council Member said they would be happy to facilitate a discussion about the devolution of Packsaddle to Frome Town Council.

In response, another member suggested that the discussion for the LCN should include the broader issue of how Frome needed to grow and where any new housing would go. Assets, land and infrastructure was likely to be a theme of one of the meetings.

Parish Council Members hoped the LCN would help parishes speed up the resolution of local issues.

Members said it was important that the LCN should help the Somerset Council develop its strategies. The Chair commented that The LCN would have to choose carefully which strategies to concentrate on.

Item 6: **Agree the minutes from previous meetings**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 May 2023 were agreed.

Members requested that minutes and other important documents be sent to parishes as early as possible so they could be given proper consideration. It was important that parishes felt engaged with the discussions being held by the Network.

Item 7: **To consider the summary of work to date**

Kate Hellard, Lead Officer explained a draft report had been forwarded to members in advance of the meeting. It gave an overview of what had happened during the pilot. Issues had included children's services in the area, and funding.

The Officer asked that members give particular consideration to the section about lessons learned. Members were encouraged to send their feedback directly to the Lead Officer, who would report back to the next meeting.

The Chair said it was important for everyone to bring their skills to the Steering Group. Frome Town Councillor Lisa Merryweather volunteered to join the Steering Group.

Members said they would welcome a forward plan showing the themes for the forthcoming meetings.

Item 8: **To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the Local Community Network for the next 12 months**

The Chair said it was important for the Network to achieve the following tasks:

- Re-engage with parishes across the area.
- Establish how they think the LCN could best be set up to be appealing and successful.
- Consider what the issues were that could form part of an area plan.
- Consider whether they wished to be part of making the case for the devolution of assets.

The Chair said the LCN steering group would engage with the parishes so that we could determine priorities. He asked each table in the room to discuss the type of questions which should be asked of parishes in the first instance.

The questions included:

What are the strengths of your local area?

What are the challenges your local area faces?

What are the assets in your local area?

What are your aspirations for your local area “how would you like things to be”?

What data evidence do you have to support these views?

What are the priorities for your local community?

During the discussion that followed members agreed:

- The LCN needed to ask the parishes what was important to them.
- Parishes may wish to hold workshops in the communities.
- It was important to know what the urgent issues are, such as particular forms of crime. If clear urgent priorities emerge that was the case then the LCN would need to invite representatives of the Police to the next meeting.
- Confirmation of the questions should be sent to parishes as soon as possible so they could make an early start.
- Representatives of the LCN would ask for the opportunity for a slot at parish meetings to gather answers to the questions.
- The LCN would give an opportunity for parishes to ask for and provide additional professional advice and support. For instance Selwood Parish Council would have appreciated professional advice when they came to consider an application for a solar farm within the parish.

The Chair encouraged members to contact him directly with any further suggestions they had for the survey of parishes.

He said once the local issues had been established across the area, then the LCN needed to pick up the issues which were relevant to all.

Members of the Steering Group agreed to meet to give further consideration to the consultation exercise. They would report back to the Chair.

**Item 9: To agree the frequency of meetings**

The Network hoped to meet every other month. They hoped the next meeting might be held in Buckland Dinham Village Hall.

**Item 10: The schedule of meetings for the next 12 months**

Following the consultation exercise, a forward plan for the LCN would be drawn up. It was hoped that each meeting of the LCN would have a theme in order to focus discussion on top priorities.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team [lcns@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lcns@somerset.gov.uk)