



Notice of Meeting of

LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK - HESTERCOMBE

Wednesday, 21 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

**North Petherton Rugby Club, Beggars Brook
Taunton Road, North Petherton, Bridgwater TA6
6NW**

To: The members of the Local Community Network - Hestercombe

Chair: Stuart Haskins
Vice-chair: Councillor Norman Cavill

Councillor Lee Baker	Councillor Alan Bradford
Councillor Dixie Darch	Councillor Tom Deakin
Councillor David Fothergill	Councillor Derek Perry
Councillor Bill Revans	Broomfield Parish Council
Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council	Creech St Michael Parish Council
Durston Parish Meeting	Kingston St Mary Parish Council
North Petherton Town Council	Thurloxtton Parish Council
West Monkton Parish Council	

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact LCN Team lcn@somerset.gov.uk.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring

Officer at email: democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk by **5pm on Thursday, 15 February 2024**.

The LCN team want everybody to have the opportunity to take part in the LCN meetings and have booked appropriate venues with accessibility requirements in mind. If you have specific access needs, and are at all concerned, please contact the LCN Team so they can provide reassurance or seek solutions beforehand: lcn@somerset.gov.uk.

Issued by David Clark (the Proper Officer) on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

AGENDA

**Local Community Network - Hestercombe - 7.00 pm Wednesday, 21 February
2024**

Core Membership (Pages 5 - 6)

Click here to join the online meeting (Pages 7 - 8)

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes: [City, Town & Parish Twin Hatters - Somerset Councillors 2023](#))

3 Notes from the Previous Meeting (Pages 9 - 14)

To approve the notes from the previous meeting.

4 Public Question Time

The Chair to advise of any questions, statements or petitions received that are not covered by items on the agenda for the meeting on which members of the public have requested to speak.

5 Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting

To discuss matters arising from the notes not covered in later agenda items.

6 Highway Maintenance - Working Group

7 Action and next steps for Youth Provision

8 Discussion Topic - Health and Wellbeing

9 Dates and topics of future meetings

Core Membership

Unitary Councillors:

Councillor Lee Baker

Councillor Alan Bradford

Councillor Norman Cavill

Councillor Dixie Darch

Councillor Tom Deakin

Councillor David Fothergill

Councillor Derek Perry

Councillor Bill Revans

City, Town and Parish Councils (one voting member from each):

Broomfield

Cheddon Fitzpaine

Creech St. Michael

Durstun

Kingston St Mary

North Petherton

Thurloxtun

West Monkton

Other Stakeholders (one voting member from each):

Avon and Somerset Police

NHS

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

Education

Spark Somerset

Society Local Council Clerks

Somerset Association Local Councils

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership

Community Council for Somerset

Citizens Advice

Department of Work and Pensions

Somerset Rivers Authority

Somerset Local Nature Partnership

Business Chamber

Quantocks AONB

Canal River Trust

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Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Hestercombe

Date: Monday, 11 December 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.55 pm

Location: Britton's Ash Community Hall, Bridgwater Road, Bathpool, Taunton, TA2 8FT

Chaired by: Stuart Haskins (West Monkton Parish Council) (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Dixie Darch	Somerset Council
Katie Gibbins	Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Cllr Liz Leyshon	Somerset Council
Cllr Heather Shearer	Somerset Council
Amy Shepherd	West Monkton Parish Council
Cllr Julian Taylor	North Petherton Town Council
Doug Wilson	Broomfield Parish Council

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Max Perry	Democratic Services, Somerset Council
Jonathan Hallows	Democratic Services, Somerset Council

Kate Hellard

LCN Team, Somerset Council

Emmaline Kay

LCN Team, Somerset Council

Apologies:

Name:

Representing

Cllr Tom Deakin

Somerset Council

Cllr David Fothergill

Somerset Council

Cllr Bill Revans

Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 17: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following individuals:

- Cllr Norman Cavill
- Cllr Tom Deakin
- Cllr Lee Baker
- Cllr Bill Revans
- Cllr Alan Bradford
- Andrew Williams – Clerk to Creech St Michael Parish Council

Item 18: Declarations of Interest

There were no new Declarations of Interest raised at this time.

Item 19: Notes from the Previous Meeting

The notes were approved as a true and accurate record on the meeting held on the 2nd of October 2023.

Item 20: **Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting**

There were no updates on actions from the previous meeting.

Item 21: **Public Question Time**

Public Questions were raised at the item that was discussed, rather than this item.

Item 22: **Update on Somerset Council Financial Situation**

This item was presented by Cllr Liz Leyshon (Lead Member for Resources and Performance), on behalf of the Leader of Somerset Council, Cllr Bill Revans.

- Cllr Leyshon explained the background information as to how the current financial circumstances had impacted on Somerset Council. She then discussed details of last year's budget and how that has fed on into this financial year, describing what has been a 'catch up year' to make up for the impact of inflation on services/funding.
- With the positive that the minimum living wage had risen, Somerset Council had then been hit over the course in the last few year, by soaring costs of Adult Social Care across the county as a result of the abandoned Fair Cost of Care exercise.
- The Councillor then discussed the implementations put in place since the declaration of Somerset Council's financial emergency, particularly focusing on the creation of the 3 'Spending Boards', that have the final say on all spending going out of the authority above a certain limit. Then raising that the threats would come from attempting to set the program of reserves for next year, and that would push us closer to the option of having to declare a Section 114.
- The further impacts on the Council were then discussed with it likely to be slimmed down, with fewer officers and offices to conduct its business.
- Cllr Leyshon then discussed the recent letter sent out by the Leader of the Council, reassuring Parishes that they were not be forced to take on assets that they could not support, but meanwhile stressing the importance of working together to find a solution to allow for the delivery

of essential services.

A discussion followed about the issues raised:

- Whether a crucial area such as Highways would be devolved or stay with Somerset Council, to which the Lead Member confirmed that due to its importance it would stay as a responsibility of the Unitary Authority.
- This prompted a discussion of the creation and trial of 'Highways Steward' posts, that would operate in and around several Parishes, identifying and fixing any issues, and carrying out general maintenance on Highways across their attributed area.
- The job description for this role will be available as soon as possible so that they can gauge interest from Parishes
- How good was the response to the Leader of Council's letter had been from the Parish Councils? The response was mixed, many big town councils are keen on taking on different services/facilities, but a few smaller Parish have raised concerns about their capabilities and whether they were being pressed to take on than they could handle.
- Officers/Councillors then debated the idea of Parishes putting some of their Parish Precept income into a 'Village Improvement Fund'.
- A further discussion was held on the question of who held the responsibility for the staff providing services Parishes may take on. The response was that it was dependent on how the services were provided under the pre-Unitary authority, as there are several different ways they are handled around the county.
- The next question, focused on Buses, inquiring whether the financial situation would have an impact on Rural Services? The answer given stated that the future of the at the present time was unclear, but it must be acknowledged that once current funding runs out that it will be a challenge to maintain frequency of some services.

Item 23: **Updates from Flood Resilience Meeting (20th October)**

This item was presented by attending Parish Councillor Alan

Hall, who is Vice-Chair for West Monkton Parish Council.

- A broad description was given regarding the impacts of recent flooding in Bathpool, and other places within the Hestercombe LCN area. Research had been conducted in these areas, working with agencies and neighbours to find sites effected.
- Through this, the Quantock Hills had been identified as the prime area for concern. Engineers have been visiting the land around the area to analyse what mitigations can be put in place.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Who is paying for this ongoing work? The response was that the Environment Agency had provided funding for it.
- There were concerns raised that the mitigations in the Quantocks would lead to later problems. There was an offer to visit the Somerset Rivers Authority and learn more about their work.

The action was then taken that Local Community Networks (LCNs) should write a coordinated letter to all Members of Parliament (MPs) that have a flood-affected area of their constituency within the Hestercombe LCN boundary in order to try and request support in tackling the issue.

Item 24: **Action and Next Steps for Youth Provision**

- The Chair made an opening statement, asking the about whether they felt there was enough Youth provision in their areas, and informing them that there are 12 schools within the boundary of the Hestercombe LCN.
- The representative from SPARK Somerset spoke on the importance in such an area that people are brought together, helping secure vital funding and connecting different organisations and professionals within the LCN.
- There was a need identified for more knowledge and awareness of the work that SPARK Somerset are doing.
- Representatives from the Parishes of Creech St Michale and North Petherton raised their interests in how to involve their communities.
- There was a consensus across the attending group

regarding issues with provision for Youth Support across the LCN area, particularly with indoor/outdoor venues to hold these sessions in. it was suggested that the LCN good look into seeing what facilities are available in an area and sharing that information.

- It was suggested that the way to proceed was to gain the direct opinions of young people, either in person or via a survey.
- The LCN were asked in liaison with SPARK Somerset to help Parishes understand what funding is available to help improve facilities, and where it can be found.

Item 25: **Dates and Topics of Future Meetings**

The date of the next meeting of the Hestercombe LCN is the **21st of February 2024.**

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