



Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Community Network - Avalon and The Poldens held in the Tor Sports and Leisure, Street Road, Glastonbury, BA6 9EF, on Monday, 29 January 2024 at 7.00 pm.

Present:

Cllr Matthew Martin (Chair)
Cllr Councillor Bryan Knickerbocker (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Simon Carswell
Cllr Tim Kerley
Cllr Heather Shearer
Cllr Liz Leyshon

Parishes In attendance:

Ashcott – Councillors John Corsan and Gus Wans
Baltonsborough – Councillor Mary Phillips
Catscott – Councillors Geoff Barnett and James Hall
Cossington – Councillor Georgia Terry
Edington – Councillor David Heale
Glastonbury – Councillors Lindsay MacDougall, Indra Donfrancesco, Loka Bandhu, Mike Smythe, Michael White, Paul Manning, Jon Cousins and Ian Much
Meare & Westhay – Councillor Chris Bennett
Stawell – Councillors Phillip Jay and Hugh Gange-Harris
Street – Councillor Laura Wolfers
Walton – Councillor John Harvey and Clerk Helen Moore

Public

Susannah Clemence
Jacqueline Ross

Stakeholders

Jenny Lawrence – Somerset Association
Local Councils
Jonathan Hudson – Somerset Rivers
Authority
John Dodson – Neighbourhood Watch
Ron Atherton - Neighbourhood Watch

Officers

Kate Hellard – LCN Officer
Helen Bowen - Democratic Service
Nathan Turnbull – Locality Officer
Tom Parkinson – Technical Solutions
Beth Poole – Interim LCN Officer
Paul Elliston – Community Engagement

Present Online:

Councillor Suria Aujla
Ally Laing – Social Media and
Communications Officer
Emily Window – LCN Officer
Jason Wyatt
Jessica Lewin – Connect Somerset
Siobahn White – Connect Somerset
John Lapwood – Village Agent

27 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillors Gail and Ashman.

28 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were none.

29 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 3

The notes from the meeting held on 27 November 2023 were proposed by Councillor Simon Carswell and seconded by Councillor Chris Bennett and were unanimously agreed.

30 Our LCN Purpose and Mission - Agenda Item 4

The Chair read out the Mission Statement and invited the LCN members to discuss the purpose of the LCN and what it wanted to accomplish. There was a health debate and some of the questions and answers included the following:

- The mission statement should say “Somerset Council” not “new Council”
- The statement is too vague and unclear.
- The information that was promised to be provided in the previous meeting

and referred to in the minutes has not been delivered.

- Can there be a more informal network within this LCN?
- Is there any budget for this LCN? The Chair advised that there was no budget for this or any LCN and that there was still no permanent Officer support. However, recruitment was taking place soon.
- The LCN needs to set achievable and feasible goals. It would be useful to know what other LCNs have been able to achieve. The LCN Officer advised that the 3 pilot LCNs had focussed on different topics. There was a plan to bring all LCN Chairs and Vice-Chairs together to share this information and she made a commitment to provide the information missing from the LCN website.
- Feels like we are covering the same ground at each LCN and that we had already discussed what we wanted to do.
- In the previous 2 meetings we should have had some Highways Officers attend but still none have attended. The LCN Officer advised that Highways Officers had agreed to join in a Highways Sub Group and suggested this LCN form one.
- There needs to be better continuity between the LCN meetings. They should be more focussed on a particular challenge.
- Need to know what things are feasible to achieve by an LCN and focus on those.
- Core attendance needs to improve. Jenny Lawrence from SALC advised that they were trying to get representatives at each of the LCNS to help coordinate the needs.

The Chair then proposed that a Highways Sub Group be formed and asked for volunteers. The following people expressed in joining this sub group:

John Harvey
Indra Donfrancesco
Chris Bennet
David Heale
Jeff Barnet
Lyndsey MacDougall
Georgia Terry

LCN Officer, Kate Hellard, then delivered a presentation on the Highways Steward concept which had successfully been started in the Exmoor LCN area. She advised that the Steward could start as early as 1st April 2024 but could also be appointed later in the year. Stewards would have to be appointed for a minimum of a year and Towns and Parishes could share the appointment. There was a request that the

PowerPoint presentation be shared immediately with the LCN and that further information be sent to both the Clerks and Chairs of the Parish/Town councils. There was a suggestion that if the bigger Town or Parish Councils appointed a Highways Steward, they could potentially “rent” time to the smaller parishes who may not have enough funds to buy into the scheme.

31 Discussion on Local Asset and Service Devolution - Agenda Item 5

During the group discussion, the LCN members highlighted the following:

- Planning and enforcement – When needing to speak to a Planning Officer, unable to speak to the same person. No consistency.
- Speeding within the village of Ashcott.
- There is a Speedwatch group in Pedwell.
- Will the new contractor, Kier, address basic works and safety issues?
- Difficult to say what the Parish and Town Councils can take over in terms of devolution if it is not known what services are going to be cut.
- Concerns over public safety. Who will undertake and pay for Health and Safety training, how often will it happen and what will it consist of?
- Need to boost the volunteer network.
- Important to keep people out of care homes.
- Safety on the roads, in particular the A361.
- Emergency planning – need to have a coordinated emergency plan.
- Fear of the unknown – there may be compulsory adoption of services but we don’t know what yet.
- Tree surgeons on a voluntary basis. Training required.
- Fear of a rural and town divide.
- Need to get some quick wins by taking on a simple service, such as grass cutting, bus shelter maintenance, and see what happens.
- Consider dog waste bins and blocked drains as services that could be devolved.

32 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 6

A question from a member of the public regarding the provision of a pedestrian crossing by the KFC in Glastonbury was raised. She said she had been trying to find someone within the Council to assist her with getting one in place which would greatly benefit all pedestrians but in particular, the residents of the Millstream Estate. She was advised to contact the Somerset Divisional Councillors Susannah Hart and Nick Cottle but said she had been trying for over a year to do this but had

no response from them. She was advised to raise it through the newly formed Highways Sub-Group and also approach Glastonbury Town Council.

33 Update from the Health Working Group - Agenda Item 7

Nathan Turnbull advised that the Health Working Group had not met since the last LCN meeting. He was keen to get more people involved and asked for volunteers to join the Health Working Group. The following indicated their interest in joining the Working Group:

Jon Cousins
Heather Shearer
Liz Leyshon
Michael White
Chris Meare
Paul Manning
Jacqueline Ross
John Dodson
John Harvey

34 Action and Next Steps - Agenda Item 8

The Chair, Councillor Matt Martin, asked the LCN to consider what actions they wanted and subjects for the next meeting agenda. The following were the suggestions made:

- A link to the details of the proposed Highways Stewards
- A list of all the services that could be devolved to towns and parishes
- A group to be established for all Parish/Town clerks from this LCN. This would enable a more strategic and structured approach to the question of devolution.
- The lack of a pharmacy in Glastonbury.
- Before next meeting of this LCN, the Health Working Group and newly formed Highways Working Group need to have met.
- A review of the decisions made by the Executive and Full Council meetings held in February 2024.

35 Dates of future meetings - Agenda Item 9

The date of the next Avalon and the Poldens LCN was given as Wednesday, 27 March 2024. Location to be determined.

(The meeting ended at 9.35 pm)

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CHAIR