

Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK - CHARD AND BLACKDOWNS

Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

**Tatworth Memorial Hall,
Kents Road, South Chard TA20 2QA**

To: The members of the Local Community Network - Chard and Blackdowns

Chair: Councillor Keith Read (West Hatch Parish Council)
Vice-chair: Councillor Sarah Wakefield

Councillor Jason Baker
Councillor Jenny Kenton
Councillor Martin Wale

Councillor Ross Henley
Councillor Connor Payne
Neroche Parish Council

Buckland St Mary PC
Churchstanton PC
Corfe PC
Neroche PC
Pitminster PC
Stoke St Mary PC
Wambrook PM
Whitestaunton PM

Chard TC
Combe St Nicholas PC
Hatch Beauchamp PC
Otterford PC
Ruishton & Thornfalcon PC
Tatworth & Forton PC
West Hatch PC

And other stakeholders as detailed in the core membership on pages 5 and 6.

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact the LCN Team lcnsomerset@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, 11 January 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: lcnsomerset@somerset.gov.uk.

Issued by David Clark, Monitoring Officer (the Proper Officer) on Thursday, 4 January 2024.

AGENDA

Local Community Network - Chard and Blackdowns 7.00 pm Wednesday, 17 January 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 - 16)

To approve the notes from the previous meeting.

4 Update on Somerset Council's current financial position - Q & A

5 Actions from last meeting

6 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.

7 Discussion

What can we do / want to do locally regarding asset and service devolution?

- a. What are the opportunities and risks?
- b. What information do we have and what do we need?
- c. How can we work together to achieve agreed actions?

8 Formation of workgroups

9 Dates of future meetings

Core Membership

Unitary Councillors:

Councillor Jason Baker
Councillor Ross Henley
Councillor Jenny Kenton
Councillor Connor Payne
Councillor Sarah Wakefield
Councillor Martin Wale

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

Bickenhall
Buckland St. Mary
Chard Town
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

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

This meeting is an in-person meeting at Tatworth Memorial Hall.

If you are unable to make the meeting in person we are also trialling a hybrid set-up
– the joining details are below:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 371 064 728 563

Passcode: BUaU4K

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+44 1823 772277,,202837073#](#) United Kingdom, Taunton

Phone Conference ID: 202 837 073#

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Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Chard and Blackdowns

Date: Monday, 23 October 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.36 pm

Location: Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton TA3 6SG

Chaired by: Keith Read (West Hatch Parish Council) (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Neal Parsons	Buckland St Mary Parish Council
Ian Firth	Churchstanton Parish Council
Kevin Comer	Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council
Mark Palmer	Neroche Grouped Council
Peter Cordier	Pitminster PC
Melvyn Mullins	Ruishton & Thornfalcon Parish Council
Colin Fisher	Stoke St Mary Parish Council
Ross Henley	Somerset Council
Jenny Kenton	Somerset Council
Sarah Wakefield (Vice-Chair)	Somerset Council

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Tim Cook	Somerset Council
Beth Poole	Somerset Council
Tom Parkinson	Somerset Council
Angela Cox	Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Gareth Hughes (Clerk)	Chard TC
Julie Wardle (Clerk)	Churchstanton PC
Andy Grant	Hatch Beauchamp PC
Lucy Montgomery	Otterford PC
Richard Tyzack (Clerk)	Pitminster PC
Martin Middleton	West Hatch PC
Sheila Read	West Hatch PC
Caroline Matthews	Avon & Somerset Police
Lisa Turner	Blackdown Hills AONB
Ken Pearson	Blackdown Hills Parish Network
George Roffe-Silvester	Blackdown Support Group
Paul Elliston	Somerset Rivers Authority

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Dawn Rogers	Somerset Council
Jody Green	Resident of Chard
Heather Bryant (Clerk)	Ruishton & Thornfalcon PC
Adrian Whatmore	Pitminster PC

Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Jason Baker	Somerset Council
Martin Wale	Somerset Council
John Harrison	Corfe PC
A representative	Combe St Nicholas PC

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 9: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jason Baker, Martin Wale, John Harrison (Chair of Corfe PC) and a representative from Combe St Nicholas PC.

Item 10: Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ross Henley advised that he was Chair of the Wellington & Wiveliscombe LCN.

Councillor Sarah Wakefield noted that she was Vice-Chair of the Chard & Blackdowns LCN.

Item 11: Notes from the Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 02 August 2023 were approved as a correct record by those present.

Item 12: Public Question Time

In response to questions, the Chair and Locality Manager confirmed that Somerset Council had their own Communications Team who would publicise the work of the LCNs and any parish who wished to request a particular item for discussion at an LCN meeting could contact the LCN team at: lcns@somerset.gov.uk

Mark Palmer of Neroche Parish Council asked that social media links be shared as local residents felt they were not being informed about the work of the LCNs.

Item 13: Highlights of themes discussed at the last meeting

The Chairman drew attention to the 12 areas of priority which had been identified at the first LCN meeting on 02 August as:-

Transport – local transport solutions & Active Travel	Access to medical services
Planning Policy	Anti-social behaviour
Rural Isolation	Conservation
Youth provision	Flooding
Climate & Environment	Highways – road maintenance & A358
Road Safety – speed of traffic	Communication & connectivity

Colin Fisher of Stoke St Mary PC said that all of the priority areas had been identified and he did not feel that it was for the LCN to now say they were not interested in any of them.

Later in the discussion, it was noted that the LCN working groups could join together across the County to progress common projects and priorities.

Item 14: **An introduction to data**

Beth Poole, Locality Officer, introduced a slide of statistics which related directly to the Chard and Blackdowns LCN area. She advised that the data gave an indication of what was available and to give an understanding of the area. She noted that some of the data could be misleading and the Census 2021 data would now be 2 years old. The school census data was updated twice a year and the Somerset Intelligence Network could provide data on a parish by parish basis:

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>

There were ongoing opportunities to build data for the LCN working groups to gain further information which could help towards funding bids for projects.

During discussion, it was noted that:

- Parish Councils who required more information could contact the LCN team at lcns@somerset.gov.uk
- Some of the data could be skewed by Chard town statistics.
- It would be possible to benchmark the data across all of the LCNs.

Item 15: **Discussion: To agree initial priorities and the formation of working groups**

The Chair invited the LCN members present and on-line to join break-out groups to identify 3 priority areas from the 12 identified at their initial meeting in August. He noted that the LCN discussions would be as informal and inclusive as possible and Parish Clerks were welcome to join in the debate. After the discussions, the groups feedback was:

Group 1

Social Services and rural isolation.

Lengthsman Scheme for drainage and highway maintenance issues.

Youth Provision – explore Youth Councils in the area.

Group 2

Access to medical services - no NHS Dentist in Chard and only one Doctors Surgery.

Transport – the Somerset Bus Partnership had trialled a service in Hatch Beauchamp which had recently ended but there was an excellent local car sharing service. The Slinky Bus service needed to be looked at.

Services for young people – Chard paid £10,000 towards its youth service provision. Hatch Beauchamp had lots of services for the elderly but not many for the youth.

Group 3

Considered the rurality of the area and felt that many of the priorities identified were interconnected like climate & environment / flooding/ road safety as they covered speeding, road maintenance, Lengthsman Scheme and the impact of flooding.

Group 4

Planning Policy – the Somerset Local Plan / policy / health.

Connectivity and Communication – support for older people.

Climate & Environment – economic support and energy.

On-line group:

Planning enforcement is weak and there is a perception that nothing is happening.

Highways – there was support for a Lengthsman Scheme and to learn from the experiences of other parishes.

In response to questions, the Locality Manager replied:

- Highway issues had been raised at many of the LCN meetings and Highway Officers had subsequently attended some LCN meetings.
- There was the potential for lobbying on issues like access to medical services by combining the voices of the LCNs.
- There were still some Parish Rangers in existence but only two or three schemes remained. The Exmoor pilot LCN had looked at providing low level maintenance for highways.

The Chair asked for people who would be willing to put themselves forward to join a sub-working group and the following people agreed:

Peter Cordier – Youth

Mark Palmer – Connectivity and

Sheila Read – Environment

Spud Middleton – Highways

Andy Grant – Transport & Connectivity

Ken Pearson – Environment

During discussion it was noted that:

- Parishioners should be encouraged to join the working groups.
- The Unitary Council should repair potholes etc in roads early to prevent insurance claims by motorists for damage to their vehicles.
- The working groups could decide their own terms of reference
- The recent Local Plan consultation had not felt very open but more leading questions.
- Neighbourhood Plans were out of date within 2 years. The new Somerset Local Plan should be more local.

Item 16: **Dates of future meetings**

The provisional dates for future meetings were noted as:

- Wednesday 17 January 2024- venue to be confirmed
- Wednesday 13 March 2024 - venue to be confirmed.

Please note that the LCN team work hard to minimise diary clashes but asked that they be contacted on lcn@somerset.gov.uk if there are any issues.

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

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