

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Cheddar and Axbridge

Date: Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Time: 6.30 pm - 7.55 pm

Location: Draycott Memorial Hall (Corrick Room) Latches Lane, Draycott, Cheddar,
Somerset, BS27 3UE

Chaired by: Pauline Ham (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Bob Filmer	Somerset Council
Tony Grimes	Somerset Council
Matthew Martin	Somerset Council
Ros Wyke	Somerset Council
Jackie Hipwelll	Badgworth Parish Council
Claire Settle	Compton Bishop Parish Council
Jacky Farley	Wedmore Parish Council
Lynn Myland (on-line)	Weare Parish Council

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Jeff Brown	Somerset Council

Julie Cooper Somerset Council

Tom Parkinson, Technical Solutioner Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Barbara Wells	Axbridge Town Council
Mike Taylor	Axbridge Town Council
Doreen Smith	Connect Somerset

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Bella Lapwood	CCS
Kate Hellard	Somerset Council
Angela Cox	Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 39: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Shearer (Somerset Council), Gemma Gaut (Shipham PC), Delia McCarthy (Compton Bishop Parish Council) and Jim Hardcastle (Mendip Hills National Landscape).

Item 40: **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Somerset Councillors present at the meeting.

Item 41: **Agree the notes of the last Meeting**

The Chair advised that Bob Abbott had requested that the

meeting notes include his comments at note number 32:
Discussion: Highway Steward proposal, regarding the value of working with the Council to employ an experienced contractor.

With this amendment agreed, the notes of the previous LCN meeting held on 06 March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

Item 42: **Actions from last meeting**

The Chair advised that the first meeting of the Highway Working Group would be held on Thursday 18 April at 10.00am in Axbridge Town Hall.

Item 43: **Public Questions (not covered by the agenda)**

There were no questions from the public present.

Item 44: **Revisiting our priority themes**

The Chair advised that following priority themes had been identified and prioritised at their October meeting:-

Transport (inc Highways, Road Maintenance, Active Travel, Local Transport Solutions and Road Safety) – 24

Planning Enforcement – 14

Climate & Environment – 9

Access to Services – 8

Housing – 6

Affordable Housing – 5

Community Safety - 4

Communications – 2

Economy – 1

She noted that a Highways Working Group had now been set up and the LCN would seek to address Planning at a later date as there was still a great deal of change taking place. Therefore, the Chair confirmed that the two priority themes to be taken forward were:

- Climate and Environment
- Access to Services

Item 45: **Climate and Environment**

The Chair invited Councillor Ros Wyke, the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets, to address the meeting regarding the Climate and Environment theme.

Councillor Ros Wyke advised that the previous Somerset County Council had declared a Climate Emergency and had aspired to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council were now reviewing this and required support from central government. She also advised that legislation on biodiversity net gain was being introduced for major and minor building projects (although it did not affect individual householders). The concept of the scheme was to take a baseline of a development site prior to development and then create a 10% uplift on that biodiversity at the end of the build. It was a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity. There were options for developers to buy credits if they were unable to meet the 10% uplift on the site. The scheme would add to the cost of developing a site and developers would need to take account of it.

There was also the issue of high levels of phosphates on the Somerset Levels and Moor Ramsar site due to agricultural sources and waste water from households. The protected areas were currently at risk due to excessive levels of phosphates entering the water system and impacting wildlife. Development had been held up as sites needed phosphate assessment and mitigation and this equated to 18,000 houses in Somerset. The Council had successfully bid for £10M funding to install nutrient mitigation measures to address the issue. It was hoped this would unlock future housing development. Other helpful initiatives happening in the county were re-wilding projects, tree planting, farmland taken out of production and working with the Quantock Hills area of National Landscape towards a scheme of regenerative farming.

In response to a question, Councillor Wyke advised that housing developers would submit a biodiversity net gain assessment, prior to development, completed by an qualified ecologist. The assessment would be reviewed by the Council's own ecologists and conditions would be attached to any development site. There would also be post-development reviews.

Item 46: **Discussion - what are the issues for the LCN regarding our priority themes**

Doreen Smith of Connect Somerset invited those present to discuss in groups the topic:

- Access to Services

The groups were invited to discuss the following questions:

1. Why is access to services important? (both clinical and non-clinical)
2. What are the benefits to accessing local services?
3. How do we identify where our community-based assets are?
4. How do we take our learning forward?

The meeting divided into group discussions.

Note – the presentation slides for this meeting can be viewed at the end of the printed minutes pack.

Item 47: **Access to Services**

Following the group discussion, feedback was given from each group:

Question 1: Why is access to services important? (both clinical and non-clinical)

- This was a predominantly rural area and so access was restricted
- Local Councillors should know where to signpost residents
- Community Groups should step up
- Village Agents were key to help to identify need
- Wedmore had lots of community groups who worked together to point people in the right direction.
- It would be good for the groups to come together so they all knew where to signpost people
- Let people new to the area know what is available

- Some people did not want to get involved
- Avoid loneliness
- There was a Good Neighbour scheme operating in Axbridge
- Lack of transport was an issue
- Some people needed face to face contact
- On-line options were not accessible to all people
- Word of mouth and trusted sources were invaluable to refer individuals
- Local magazines and local knowledge were useful for referrals
- Sometimes individuals did not know what services they needed
- This was a rural community and so there would be need to travel to access some services

Question 2: What are the benefits to accessing local services?

- Many elderly people were single and at risk of loneliness and isolation
- Shopping locally kept spend locally
- Local warm spaces had been set up
- Accessing services locally could reduce dormitory towns/villages
- Intergenerational matters
- Building stronger communities
- Enabling residents to stay in their own homes
- Keeps rural communities vibrant & viable
- Allows people to work from home
- Important to enable independence for Carers
- Early access to services prevents potential crises later on.

Question 3: How do we identify where our community-based assets are?

- A central information point was needed
- Town Councils should have details of local groups on their websites and a diary of events
- Notice boards in rural communities
- Village Magazines
- Word of mouth, local people & local Knowledge

- Active Church groups
- Notices on lamp posts
- Facebook and Nextdoor (Nextdoor.co.uk)
- Womens Institute (WI) and Royal British Legion
- Village Shops and Village Halls and local post delivery people
- Warm welcome
- Useful to have a local directory (The Space has a local directory: www.thespacesomerset.org.uk)
- Helpful to have the services verified in some way

Question 4: How do we take our learning forward?

- Work with Village Agents and directories like the Link Church Magazine and the Polden Post as examples
- Parish Plans could be used to draw information together
- There were benefits in volunteering
- Helpful to know what meeting space is available
- Caution that directories could quickly become out of date
- The Link Church magazine was kept up to date by local residents and local advertising within it had local economic benefits
- Possible to consider a County page or central postbox

Item 48: **Next steps/action points arising from discussion**

Doreen Smith of Connect Somerset thanked all for their feedback and she said she would collate the information. She noted that she was meeting with the Village Agents shortly and she hoped to see positive movement going forward.

The Chair advised that the next step would be to form an Access to Services Working Group to progress the points made for the wellbeing of the local communities.

During discussions the low attendance at the LCN meetings, and the need to look at enabling the LCN to be effective and have achievements and outcomes for local communities was discussed. It was noted that the LCNs were still in their infancy and actions were being achieved. It was suggested that other organisations could be drawn in to help going forward.

It was also suggested that successes at other LCN areas could be reported at the LCN AGM as an inspiration to the group.

Item 49: **Date of AGM**

The Chair noted that the Annual General Meeting of the Cheddar and Axbridge Local Community Network would take place on 18 July at 6.30pm (venue to be confirmed).

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



Your Local Community Network

Cheddar and Axbridge LCN

Agenda

Page 10

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of interest
3. Approval of notes of the last meeting
4. Actions from last meeting
5. Public Questions (anything not covered on the agenda)
6. Revisiting our priority themes
7. Discussion – what are the issues for our LCN regarding the priority themes?
 - Climate and Environment
 - Access to Services
8. Next steps/action points arising from discussion
9. Date of AGM

Highlights and themes identified thus far

Transport

Economy

Community Safety

Communication:
with SC
and between
parishes

Access to Services

Housing

Planning

Climate and
Environment

Discussion

Revisiting our priority themes

- **Climate and Environment**
- **Access to Services**

Discussion – What are the issues for the LCN in relation to these themes?

Next Steps

What actions do we need to take away?

Date for AGM

Thursday 18th July AGM

AXBRIDGE AND CHEDDAR LCN ACCESS TO SERVICES 16/05/2024

The discussion group topics were outlined by Doreen Smith, Connect Somerset Area Champion, who reminded the meeting that at the first LCN meeting the groups had discussed and agreed what was important to residents and businesses in our area? One of the topics put forward was Access to Services e.g. hospitals, GPs, mental health, and youth services.

The purpose of the discussion was to explore several areas and each group fed back the following.

Q1. Why is access to services is important (with a focus on local services clinical and non-clinical)?

- Access to services are more restricted in rural areas.
- Need local community to support those with needs.
- Important that local councillors and others e.g. Parish Councils/Clerks know where to signpost.
- Transport facilities limits the support which can be accessed but local community groups provide support.
- Village Agents can help identify needs and available help.
- Important for peoples' health and well-being.
- Avoid loneliness and isolation.
- Perhaps a need for a good neighbour scheme.
- Important for community cohesion.
- Services need to be local due to lack of transport.
- Physical access and information needed e.g. Village Agents.
- Online options not always useful as not easy to find way through.
- Local connection and word of mouth important.
- Local knowledge and local signposting and help to understand what service you need.
- But still need to travel to some services.

Q2. What are the benefits to individuals and our community to be able to access local services?

- Reduce loneliness and isolation.
- Will help our carbon footprint.
- Access to warm spaces.
- Keeping money locally.

- Create a sustainable community spirit.
- Activate ideas that may have been shelved.
- Opportunities for intergenerational activities.
- Build stronger communities.
- Reduce inequalities.
- Prevention is better than a cure!
- Enable residents to stay in their own homes and communities to enable access to care and support. Equally need support for residents with young families.
- Keeping rural communities vibrant and viable and not dormitory.
- Support remote working.
- Benefits to mental health and feeling supported.
- Help independence.
- Early intervention to reduce possibility of reaching crisis later on.

Q3. How do we identify where services and support are in the community and what would this research show?

- Village magazines provide local contacts and information.
- Village notice boards
- Village Facebook groups/social media and websites such as Nextdoor.
- Village Agents
- Local organisations such as WI
- Parish and Town Councils
- Word of mouth
- Churches
- Post offices and posties.
- Local shops
- The research would show where the current services and support can be accessed and identify gaps.
- Useful to have a directory with verified services.

Q4. How do we take our learning forward?

- Need a central point in each village where information including a diary of events can be collated and disseminated.
- Arrange meet and greet with residents in a friendly and welcoming space.

- A lot happens under the radar so research and local discussions may identify services and support we are not aware of.
- Hearing from lockdown what worked.
- Possible use of the parish and town plan.
- Effective communications keeping everyone updated and informed.

Other Comments

- We need to encourage volunteering.
- Encourage local involvement.
- Identify space that is affordable and accessible to offer 'one stop shops' where information can be sought.
- Agreed that we need to quickly action some ideas to demonstrate that we are listening and acting. This will encourage more people to be involved at LCN and local level.
- Work with the Village Agents.
- Organise a community event where people and organisations can be invited. (Currently being discussed with The Space)

This page is intentionally left blank