

# Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK - CHEDDAR AND AXBRIDGE**

**Tuesday, 16 April 2024 at 6.30 pm**

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

To: The members of the Local Community Network - Cheddar and Axbridge

Chair: Councillor Pauline Ham

Vice-chair: Councillor Councillor Franchesca Mitton

Councillor Ben Ferguson

Councillor Tony Grimes

Councillor Harry Munt

Councillor Ros Wyke

Badgworth Parish Council

Cheddar

Mark

Shipham

Wedmore

Councillor Bob Filmer

Councillor Matthew Martin

Councillor Heather Shearer

Axbridge

Chapel Allerton

Compton Bishop

Rodney Stoke

Weare

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For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact LCN Team [lcns@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lcns@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](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Wednesday, 10 April 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](mailto:lcn@somerset.gov.uk).

Issued by David Clark (the Proper Officer) on Monday, 8 April 2024

# **AGENDA**

**Local Community Network - Cheddar and Axbridge - 6.30 pm Tuesday, 16 April  
2024**

## **Core Membership (Pages 5 - 6)**

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

Click here to join the online meeting.

### **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 Agree the notes of the last Meeting (Pages 9 - 18)**

To approve the notes from the previous meeting.

### **4 Actions from last meeting**

### **5 Public Questions (not covered by the agenda)**

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.

### **6 Revisiting our priority themes**

### **7 Discussion - what are the issues for the LCN regarding our priority themes**

**7.1** Climate and Environment

**7.2** Access to Services

**8** Next steps/action points arising from discussion

**9** Date of AGM

## **Core Membership**

### Unitary Councillors:

Councillor Ben Ferguson  
Councillor Bob Filmer  
Councillor Tony Grimes  
Councillor Pauline Ham  
Councillor Matthew Martin  
Councillor Harry Munt  
Councillor Heather Shearer  
Councillor Ros Wyke

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

Axbridge  
Badgworth  
Chapel Allerton  
Cheddar  
Compton Bishop  
Mark  
Rodney  
Shipham  
Weare  
Wedmore

### 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

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# Local Community Network Cheddar and Axbridge

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024

6.30pm – 8.00pm

Draycott Memorial Hall (Corrick Room)

Latches Lane  
Draycott  
Cheddar  
Somerset  
BS27 3UE

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We'd love to see you in person, but if you can't make it this time, we're trialling a hybrid set-up, so please use this.

## **MS Teams Link**

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 398 125 695 00

Passcode: AnMGFe

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

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## **Please note:**

Parking is available at the hall.

We want everybody to have the opportunity to take part in the LCN meetings - fully and comfortably - and have booked appropriate venues with accessibility requirements in mind.

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**[lcn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lcn@somerset.gov.uk)**

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Notice of Meeting of

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK - CHEDDAR AND AXBRIDGE**

**Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 6.30 pm**

**Draycott Memorial Hall, Latches Lane, Draycott,  
Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3UE**

To: The members of the Local Community Network - Cheddar and Axbridge

Chair: Councillor Pauline Ham  
Vice-chair: Councillor Franchesca Mitton

### **Present:**

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

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Councillor Pauline Ham	Somerset Council
Councillor Ben Ferguson	Somerset Council
Councillor Ros Wyke	Somerset Council
Councillor Francesca Mitton	Axbridge Town Council
Councillor Val Bullen	Rodney Stoke & Draycott Parish Council
Councillor Jacky Farley	Wedmore Parish Council
Councillor Fiona Torrens-Spence	Chapel Allerton Parish Council

#### **Officer attendance:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Sunita Mills	Somerset Council

Rod Semple	Somerset Council
Sam Crossman	Somerset Council
Julie Cooper	Somerset Council

**Other attendees:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Councillor Derek Bradley Balmer	Cheddar Parish Council
Councillor Bob Abbott	Independent for Cheddar
Councillor Jackie Burley	Wedmore Parish Council
Councillor Shaun Thorogood	Wedmore Parish Council
Councillor Barbara Wells	Axbridge Town Council
Councillor D Bradley-Palmer	Cheddar Parish Council

**Virtual attendees:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Andrew Turner	Highways
Terry Mason	SALC & Compton Bishop
Gemma Gaut	Shipham Parish Council
Lynn Myland	Weare Parish Council & Chairman Somerset Local Access Forum
Lewis Clarke	
Doreen Smith	The Space Cheddar & Connect Somerset
Jim Hardcastle	Mendip Hills National Landscape
Dave Champion	Independent Member - Cheddar
Lina Curiale-Hopkinson	Somerset Community Council

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Issued by David Clark (the Proper Officer) on Tuesday, 27 February 2024

## **AGENDA**

### **Local Community Network - Cheddar and Axbridge - 6.30 pm Wednesday, 6 March 2024**

#### **26 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Heather Shearer
- Councillor Tony Grimes
- Councillor Matt Martin
- Councillor Bob Filmer
- Councillor Paul Fineran, substituted by Councillor D Bradley-Palmer
- Delia McCarthy

#### **27 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

#### **28 Notes from the Previous Meeting**

It was noted that the notes of the meeting held on 9 January 2024 were titled 'minutes' which was incorrect and should be changed to 'notes'.

Cllr Pauline Ham must be recorded as chairing the meeting and listed in the core membership.

Cllr Francesca Mitton must be recorded as Vice Chair of the meeting and listed as in attendance.

The Notes from the meeting held on 19 February 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

It was confirmed that Paul Fineran would send through a list of items he believed were missing from the notes. This list must be sent around so that it can be considered by the Chair and Vice Chair. These will be agreed at the minutes item in the next meeting.

## **29 Actions from last meeting**

There were none.

## **30 Brief update on Somerset Council's current financial position**

Councillor Ros Wyke reported on the current situation regarding Somerset Council's financial position.

She confirmed that:

- A balanced budget had been put together, which was passed by Full Council.
- A large number of savings had been made and they had been supported by the Town and Parish Councils to achieve this, for example carrying the cost of CCTV.
- Central Government had listed Somerset at one of 19 counties who had received a capitalisation directive, which meant they Somerset could sell assets and use the capital.
- Somerset was awarded a £4 billion investment because they were chosen as the new location for the UK's new gigafactory. This would also create 4 000 jobs and money to support the skills agenda, which would help young people to better themselves.
- The factory would be located in Puritan, near Bridgwater, on the old munitions factory site as there is already a Local Development Order (LDO) over that site which speeds up planning permissions.
- This was advantageous to the company as well as to others, as business rates would be charged on the enterprise zone. For Somerset Council, this meant that 100% of the rates could be collected by them for a long period of time.
- Somerset Council was continuing to heavily control costs within the council and they have reduced their overspend down to £16M.
- The Council has opened the voluntary redundancy scheme in order to slim down the staff and compulsory redundancies will be executed after that period is over.

## **31 Public Question Time (not covered by the agenda)**

There were none.

## 32 Discussion: Highway Steward proposal

Andrew Turner considered the letter sent by Mike O'Dowd-Jones, Service Direct Infrastructure and Transport to all Parish Councils and drew the following to everyone's attention:

- The savings that the council were considering, namely, the proposed highways savings of around £200k (a reduction of about 15%) is what they spend on grass cutting, gully emptying, hedge trimming and treating noxious weeds. He confirmed that the vast majority of highways services would continue to April 2025 to give time for local agreements to be reached.
- Currently Somerset Council was responsible for maintaining around 6,700km of carriageway and 2,600km of footways across Somerset, which is funded through capital grants from Government.
- They also operate area highways offices and undertake routine planned maintenance which is a service and is funded from Council Tax.
- There is planned maintenance and reactive maintenance. Planned maintenance is, for example, cleaning highway surface water drains on roads, cleaning gullies etc.

Reactive maintenance is issues identified by inspectors or reported by communities.

As part of Somerset Council's response to the financial emergency, the highway service plans to reduce the budget for reactive maintenance activity from April 2025. However, planned maintenance would still be undertaken.

- The next step would be putting a range of measures into place which would enable enhanced local delivery and new local arrangements prior to budgets reducing in 25/26.
- A Highway Steward, Kier Transportation, could be supplied subject to the local community confirming funding which is about £50,000 per annum.
- There is potential for local councils across Somerset to buy into this service, which would bring the additional benefit of close links with the highways service and would address concerns about taking on health and safety and insurance obligations.
- There is flexibility in how the service is commissioned; a Parish could buy one whole Steward or they could pool resources with a cluster of parishes within the LCN area.

- If this was an option and a parish would like to register then they must email [devolution@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:devolution@somerset.gov.uk) placing 'Highways Steward' in the subject line of the email.
- A similar scope of services to the Highways Steward scheme could be 'self-delivered' by localities, either through local suppliers commissioned by a Parish, or by Parish collaboration, or through a volunteer network.
- Activities could include verge maintenance, drainage maintenance, weed removal, sign cleaning, vegetation clearance, tree and hedge cutting, minor repairs to non-regulatory signs etc.
- Somerset Council is preparing a training package which will be available in the summer to enable people such as volunteers or locally skilled people to undertake agreed types of work safely in the vicinity of the highway with appropriate risk assessment.
- Somerset Council are enabling City, Town, and Parish Councils to purchase highway maintenance services direct from our contractor Kier. Our contractor is preparing a parish price list and an ordering process for this.
- If you would like to express an interest in buying services from the parish price list, then please contact [devolution@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:devolution@somerset.gov.uk) placing 'Price List' in the subject line of your email.
- There may be opportunities in the next City, Town and Parish precept round to raise funds and 'buy back' a level of service for a particular locality.
- At present the Council's budgets and programmes are planned on a countywide and area basis, so we recommend that localities wishing to buy back a level of service are better placed to do so in clusters.
- To ensure enhanced levels of service continue in the localities - over and above the basic offer - Somerset Council require their local Parishes to step forward and take on these tasks. More information can be found here: [www.somerset.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/city-town-and-parish-councils/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/city-town-and-parish-councils/).
- Somerset Council will remain responsible for the ownership and safe operation and maintenance of the highway network in this locality. They will continue to discharge their duty of care within available funding levels and in accordance with their published policies.

A highways working group will be set up and expressions of interest will be provided to the LCN officers. Terms of reference which were used for Exmoor will be provided to this LCN as a starting point of their way forward.

### 37 Presentation on Active Travel

The Head of Transportation, Sunita Mills, presented a slide show on active travel highlighting:

- The Local transport plan and active travel strategy
  - The Department for Transport requires all councils to develop a new plan and a draft be made available by summer 2024
  - Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
  - 10 year plan to guide the development of future active travel investment, primarily for built up areas, but not a delivery plan
  - They are engaging with local communities and enthusiast groups vital to developing best proposals
  - Completed in Mendip (Glastonbury, Street, Shepton Mallet, Wells)
  - In progress in Chard
- Community-led active travel
  - The Strawberry Line – led by the Strawberry Line Society, and Somerset Council, to complete sections of the path between Clevedon and Shepton Mallet
  - Ability to create off-highway routes in a more cost-effective way as there is no need to stick rigidly to highways construction standards.
  - Somerset Council would like to produce a step-by-step guide for communities who are interested in creating new links, which could include information on:
    - Assessing route feasibility;
    - Accessing and assessing different sources of mapping and topographical information;
    - Considerations and strategies for negotiating with landowners;
    - How to undertake local consultations and engagement;
    - Guidance on maintenance and liabilities;
    - Advice of funding streams and bidding for funding;
    - Information on small-scale construction (including surfaces, ecology, environmental etc);
    - Mobilising and working with volunteers.
- During the discussion which followed, the following points were raised:
  - Sunita Mills confirmed that more talks could be organised for groups if she was made aware of which groups.
  - The work which was done was evidence based from information gathered and checks and balances were done with neighbouring communities.
  - Active travel seemed to separate horse riders and equestrians and this would be considered in the future.
  - Guidance would be provided to aid in understanding what liabilities there might be for new routes which were identified. The Head of Transportation advised getting in touch with other communities who have already done this such as Taunton and Bridgwater in order to gain some insight from



## **38 Dates and topics of future meetings**

### **Actions**

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### **Topics for next meeting:**

Kate Hellard to find out more about the future of Planning in Somerset Council and an update on the Local Plan discussed during the Mendip District Council.

Topics were listed as follows:

- Transport – local solutions, active travel (Highways)
- Economy
- Community Safety
- Housing
- Planning
- Climate and Environment
- Access to services
- Communications (with Somerset Council and between towns & parishes)

It was noted that there would not be enough time for the Highways Working Group to have met before the next meeting in April.

### **Dates of next meeting**

Tuesday 16 April at 6:30

Thursday 18 July AGM at 6:30

Contact details for the meeting: [cheddarandaxbridgelcn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:cheddarandaxbridgelcn@somerset.gov.uk)

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Meeting ended at 8:20

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