

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Chard and Blackdowns

Date: Monday, 22 July 2024

Location: Corfe Village Hall

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:

- Keith Read (Chair)
- Nathan (LCN Team)
- Kate Hellard (LCN Team)
- Michelle (LCN Team)
- Colin Fisher (SFM)
- Sarah (Somerset Council) (Vice Chair)
- Andy Grant (Roads and Transport Working Group Chair)
- Mark Palmer (Environment Working Group Chair)
- Ian Firth (Churchstanton Parish Council)
- Ken Pearson (Blackdown Hills Parish Network)
- Tom Pope (Staple Fitzpaine Parish Council)

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 1: Elect the Chair of the Local Community Network

- Nathan opened the meeting and explained the voting process for the chair and vice chair elections. He asked for nominations from the core members.
- Keith Read was nominated and seconded for the chair position. He was elected unanimously by the core members. Colin Fisher proposed, and Mark Palmer seconded.

Item 2: Appoint the Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network

Sarah Wakefield was nominated by Colin Fisher and seconded by Ian Firth for the vice chair position. She was elected unanimously by the core members.

Item 3: **Consider the Yearly Report of the LCN's work in the last 12 months**

- Keith read his chair's introduction from the yearly report and thanked the LCN team, the working group chairs and the stakeholders for their involvement and support. He also announced the plan to produce a questionnaire for each parish council and other stakeholders to identify their needs and interests for the LCN.
- Nathan summarised the main points from the yearly report, which included the formation and progress of the working groups, the awareness raising of the Wild Naroche project and the discussions around the health and well-being working group. He also listed the next steps and outstanding actions for the LCN.

Update on Highways and Traffic Working Group

- Working group chair Andy Grant reported on the challenges and aspirations of the working group, such as repairing potholes, creating cycle paths and managing speeding. He also requested more support and engagement from the LCN team and the parish councils.

Update on the Climate and Environment Working Group

- Working Group Chair Mark Palmer reported on the wide range of topics and issues that the environment working group was exploring, such as hedges, wetlands, power distribution, air quality, litter, dog fouling and promoting the Somerset area. He also requested more communication and guidance from the LCN team and the other partners.

Item 4: **Overview of Highlights from LCNs across Somerset**

Overview of highlights from LCNs across Somerset

- Kate Hellard gave an overview of highlights from LCNs across Somerset, using slides to illustrate some of the examples of activities and outcomes that other LCNs have achieved. She mentioned topics such as children and young people, highways and traffic, flooding and emergency planning, active travel, health and well-being, housing, economic development and local issues. She also invited questions and feedback from the attendees.

Item 5: **Consider the Priorities and areas of focus for the LCN for the next 12 months**

- Keith asked the attendees to consider the priorities and areas of focus for the LCN for the next 12 months. He suggested three areas: engagement, communication and deliverables. He asked for input from the attendees on how to improve these areas and what they would like to see happen.
- The attendees discussed various ideas and suggestions, such as: getting more involvement from other organisations and stakeholders, sharing information and best practices across LCNs and parishes, getting more support and clarity from the LCN team and the link officer, finding funding sources and opportunities for projects, addressing local issues and needs, creating tangible and visible outcomes, and raising awareness and publicity of the LCN's work.

Item 6: Agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

- Nathan presented the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months and asked the attendees to note down the dates and to let him know if there were any clashes or issues. He also asked for volunteers to host the meetings and to provide venues.
- The Chair asked if there was any other business to raise. Ian raised two issues: the cost and process of road closure notices and the poor signage for road closures and diversions. Sarah and Kate responded to these issues and said they would follow up with the highways team. Ian also suggested creating a network of cycle tracks and mountain bike trails in the LCN area and linking with local businesses. Keith said this sounded like a topic for the working group and invited Ian to join. Mark raised an issue with the Forestry Commission and their attitude towards recreational use of the woodlands. Sarah said she had heard some complaints about this and suggested contacting the Wilding project for more information.
- Keith thanked everyone for attending and for their contributions. He closed the meeting and reminded everyone of the next meeting date.

Summary of Actions

- LCN Link Officer to produce and distribute a questionnaire for the parish councils and other stakeholders to identify their needs and interests for the LCN.
- LCN Link Officer to provide more support and communication to the working groups and to answer their outstanding questions.
- LCN Link Officer to share contact details of the working group participants and the main meeting attendees, subject to their consent.
- LCN Link Officer to facilitate cross-LCN networking and learning on topics of common interest.
- LCN Link Officer to meet with Colin Fisher to discuss engagement and communication strategies for the LCN.
- LCN Link Officer to share the list of contacts from the

highways team with the parish councils.

- LCN Link Officer to follow up with the highways team on the issues raised by Ian and to report back to the LCN.
- All to contact the parish councils and other organisations to establish interest in hosting the meetings and providing venues.
- Andy Grant and Mark Palmer to continue leading their working groups and to recruit more members and partners.
- Ian to join the roads and transport working group and to share his ideas on cycle tracks and mountain bike trails.
- Mark to contact the Wilding project for more information on the Forestry Commission's plans and policies.