

**EXMOOR PILOT LCN – Mini subgroup meeting**  
**Thursday 3 August 2023 from 2pm – 5pm**  
**3 Sminhays Cottages, Brompton Regis TA23 0LG**

**Present as expected:**

Cllr Frances Nicholson	Somerset Council
Sarah Buchanan	Brompton Regis (Brendon Hills Rep)
Christine Dubery	Dulverton Town Council (Town)
Sam Murrell (Clerk/LCN Officer)	Somerset Council

**1. To review the Highway Steward Scheme:**

A general discussion took place around the various issues that have arisen over the course of the pilot scheme.

**What has been successful?**

- Able to report minor issues and get a quick response.
- Ability to plan the work across geographic areas, and build a relationship with the parishes
- Can build a cyclical record so can spot trends and possible highlight recurring issues.
- Builds on local knowledge and direct link into Somerset Council. Relationship building with the parishes and other operatives is essential.
- Ability to incorporate work beyond just the Highway – i.e. footpaths, amenity areas, roundabouts. (Especially in Dulverton – Mill Leat).
- (Footpaths are a ENP responsibility – Agents for SC. This is something that could be developed in partnership with ENPA going forward possibly?) Villages and junctions with roads could be cleared.

**What can be improved?**

- Reporting mechanism – is there any way this could be incorporated into the defect's portal? The advantage would be that mapping can be included and single sign-in rather than having to repeat each entry. (North Devon have comprehensive mapping of their assets on the website. Is this something SC can replicate?)
- Mapping / Photographs – not easily added in the current format.
- Ability for the parishes to view the schedule. (Currently limited to officers and SC councillors.) Is there a way this could be shared to prevent duplication?
- Clear guidelines and criteria on SC procedures regarding dynamic risk assessments, hedge cutting policies and H&S. (i.e., Cutting foliage in the bird nesting season?)

- Reporting back – a way for the HS to respond to tasks especially when beyond his scope. Does this go to the superintendent, LCN link officer or the clerk? (Process mapping required). Other software is available. Some clerks said they had no idea if the work had been progressed following the HS visiting the site.
- Who assesses the quality of the work? – What is a highways standard? Essential that waste is removed from site especially around clearing of drains/grips and channels to ensure that debris does not wash back in following storms etc.
- Historic signposting – more information on the storage/repairs and the volunteer network.

#### **Any other comments?**

- At least 2 other LCN areas have expressed interest in a HS scheme – Dowsborough and Minehead/Watchet.
- Spaxton PC is pioneering a sign-washing and clearing project working alongside Traffic Management North (formerly Sedgemoor). They are also mapping the assets as SC does not currently have a record. (Parish online?)
- Salt bin audit – all bins to be checked by a superintendent. Any additional bins that have been put out need to be recorded so that SC can ensure they are filled. The parishes have requested copies of the current map so that they can check against their own records.
- Concern was expressed about the Milestone contract coming to an end and whether capacity was being built into the new contract to continue and expand the service.

## **2. Devolved Funding – Jetting requests**

The Highways Team have reviewed the latest jetting requests and the list with comments is attached. Approval is required from the Chair/sub-group committee that these works can go ahead, and sub-contractor is agreed. Dulverton Town Council have been acting as broker.

#### **Procedure**

- Jetting requests received and entered on the schedule.
- Highways team do a check to ensure that there are no conflicts with other budgets / workstreams.
- Broker – invites sub-contractors to price for the work as listed in the Schedule.
- Highways team check all credentials of the sub-contractor(s) to ensure compliance with current policies and procedures.
- The sub-group give approval on the preferred sub-contractor and enter into an agreement with the broker to pay for the work. Somerset Council will raise a limit order to ensure that the work undertaken does not exceed the available budget. The purchase order will be made out to the Broker.

- The broker will undertake all liaison with the sub-contractor and oversee the work in progress.
- The broker will invoice Somerset Council once the work has been completed. (VAT to be reclaimed via the town council).
- Somerset Council will make payment to the Broker from the devolved funding budget.
- Schedule will be updated to show the work has been completed and devolved funding budget adjustments made. Highways subgroup will be advised of any remaining 22/23 budget.

**3. Recommendations to the Exmoor LCN Sub-group Committee**

- Immediate approval of £300 payment to Dulverton Town Council (as broker) to carry out survey on the Devolved Funding Requests / Jetting Schedule. This to be carried out by their preferred sub-contractor – **APPROVED**.
- On receipt of the results of the survey to evaluate which jetting/ gully emptying requests can be progressed by Dulverton Town Council.
- To give authorisation to Dulverton Town Council on behalf of the Exmoor LCN to undertake the work, (jetting/gully emptying and disposal of all waste material) up to an agreed limit order and not to exceed the available budget.
- Parishes to map their salt bins/containers in readiness for the winter maintenance audit. A map of the existing information is attached.

**4. Meeting closed at 5pm.**