

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Exmoor

Date: Thursday, 7 September 2023

Time: 7.06 pm - 9.08 pm

Location: The Moorland Hall - Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross TA24 7DL

Chaired by: Steven Pugsley (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Frances Nicholson	Somerset Council
Sarah Buchanan (Clerk)	Brompton Regis PC
Jan Aldridge (Clerk)	Brushford PC
Cllr Sally Moran	Clatworthy PC
Cllr Jon Levenson	Cutcombe PC
Cllr Nick Thwaites	Dulverton TC
Cllr Jeremy Hickman	Exford PC
Cllr Alan Chapman	Exmoor PC
Cllr Janette Sapsford	Exton PC
Cllr Stephen Kimsey	Huish Champflower PC
Cllr Mark Bolland	Luxborough PC
Cllr Duncan McCanlis	Porlock PC
Cllr Katy Attwater	Timberscombe PB
Fran A'Brook	Upton PC

Cllr Colin Wilkins
Cllr Julian Soltau
PCSO Supervisor Katherine Williams
Dean Kinsella
Nikki Bonner
Will Lock

Winsford PC
Withypool & Hawkridge PC
Avon & Somerset Police
Exmoor National Park Authority
Village Agent (C.C.S)
Exmoor Young Voices

Officer attendance:

Name:

Kate Hellard (Virtual)
Jeff Brown
Kevin Bridgwater / Kali Martin
Colin McDonald
Beccy Brown
Tom Parkinson
Sam Murrell

Representing

Somerset Council LCN Team
Somerset Council LCN Team
Somerset Council Highways
Somerset Council Rural Housing Enabler
Somerset Council Employment & Skills
Somerset Council IT Specialist
Somerset Council / LCN / Clerk

Other attendees:

Name:

Hester Watson
Reverend David Weir
Tony Brooks
PCSO Michelle Haimes
Cllr Eric Norman (Highway Warden)
Cllr Roger Foxwell
Lesley Webb (Clerk)
Alan Collins (Highway Warden)

Representing

West Somerset Community Land Trust
Exmoor Benefice
Crowcombe PC
Avon and Somerset Police
Cutcombe PC
Cutcombe PC
Timberscombe PC
Withypool & Hawkridge PC

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Patricia Bainbridge (Clerk)	Brompton Ralph PC

Apologies:

Cllr Mike Ellicott (Exford PC), Andrew Turner (SC), Clare Pound (Homestart), Margaret Rawle (Dulverton TC), Christine Dubery (Dulverton TC), Paul Matcham (Minehead Eye / Somerset Connect), Andrew Bray (Wooton Courtenay PC), Phil Collings (DSFRS), Sally Baker (Brompton Ralph PC), Dave Powell (Luxborough PC), Norma Martin (Clatworthy PC) and Charlotte Burke (National Trust)

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 15: **Highways Winter Maintenance Annual Meeting**

This took place before the main meeting, with the Highway Wardens representing the parishes. Kevin Bridgwater and Kali Martin provided an update on the current position.

- There were no changes to the current gritting schedule, and these were as published on the map. (Circulated with agenda pack). During the last winter some of these routes had been gritted three times a day to ensure that bus routes and school/commuter roads were safe to travel. The Highways team recognised that weather events on Exmoor were exceptional for Somerset and would be taking the required mitigation to tackle this.
- A new Somerset Council Operative (Ollie Miller) was being employed to take responsibility for the auditing and checking of the Grit/Salt bins in each parish. He would check the locations, contents and refill them as required. It was very important that the Highways Team know where the new bins are going to be located so that nothing is missed. It was recommended that the operative was given the Highway Warden contact details so he could liaise directly with the parishes before visiting. This operation had already started in

certain parts of Somerset and was being well received.

Bins would be re-filled if a severe weather event was forecast over the winter. If there was a requirement to refill sooner, then the parishes could report this via the Defects Portal.

It was also requested that parishes publicised the sensible spreading of the salt from the bins. Only a thin layer was required to ensure that the road was safe, and ensure the supply lasted through the winter. A copy of the poster/notice was requested from the Highways team so this could be placed inside the lid of the salt bin.

Other winter maintenance issues from parishes:-

- **Clatworthy** – The sunken roads need a higher verge cut to prevent the foliage from dropping onto the road. This pushes pedestrians into the centre of the road, and cars can only travel down the central carriageway. – **Action** – Can a map be provided demonstrating the areas concerned and where the longer/higher cut needs to be undertaken. If this could be uploaded to the portal it will be programmed into the cutting schedule.
- **Upton** – Stressed the importance of maintaining the Green Gritting routes to ensure that school buses can get through.
- **Huishchamflower** – the requirement for Ice Warning signs to warn motorists that ice is present. (Various options were discussed).
- **Exton** – Very important that the Green Route including Exton Hill is regularly gritted as this is the route for the school bus.
- **Cutcombe** – Clarity asked for on when the hedges can be cut and whether a 2nd cut will be made. If it is a safety issue, then landowners have a responsibility to cut back sight lines. This should not be done in bird nesting season March-September, and all reasonable efforts need to be made from an ecology perspective. Most hedges that get reported to Highways do get attended to in the first few weeks of September. It was requested that a 6ft flail is used to ensure a longer/higher cut. Milestone is the contractor for SC Highways and will continue to be so for the winter of 2023/24. The contract is being tendered at the present time, and a new contractor will be employed from April 2024.
- **Porlock** – Questions were raised following the re-surfacing of the High Street and the reinstatement of the No-Unloading

kerb markings. It was explained that this was just refreshing the existing marking and would have been undertaken as part of the project. The parish council were aggrieved at the lack of communication and consultation. There is a requirement to consult with the public if there was a request to remove the Traffic Regulation Order. This would need to be escalated to the Traffic Management Team.

- **Timberscombe** – the drains that were flooding have been jetted.
- **Winsford** – The work at Yellowcombe Leat remains outstanding. It has yet to be established who owns it, despite repeated calls to Somerset Council and the Somerset Rivers Authority. Cllr Nicholson said she will continue to investigate.
- **Withypool** – The drains at Hawkridge (Kali Martin to follow up). Portford Bridge has been damaged. It was asked that this be reported to the Bridges team at bridges@somerset.gov.uk so that the team could investigate.

Further Highways Issues were picked up in the main part of the meeting under Item 7.

Item 16: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:-

Cllr Mike Ellicott (Exford PC), Andrew Turner (SC), Clare Pound (Homestart), Margaret Rawle (Dulverton TC), Christine Dubery (Dulverton TC), Paul Matcham (Minehead Eye / Somerset Connect), Andrew Bray (Wooton Courtenay PC), Phil Collings (DSFRS), Sally Baker (Brompton Ralph PC), Dave Powell (Luxborough PC), Norma Martin (Clatworthy PC) and Charlotte Burke (National Trust)

Patricia Bainbridge (Clerk to Brompton Ralph PC) attended virtually.

The Chair introduced and welcomed the following people to the Exmoor LCN meeting:-

Colin McDonald – Somerset Council, Rural Housing Enabler (Exmoor)

Beccy Brown – Somerset Council, Employment and Skills

Dean Kinsella – ENPA, Head of Planning and Sustainable Development

Nikki Bonner – Village Agent for Exmoor

Reverend David Weir – St Mary Magdalene Church, Exford
Will Lock – Chair of Exmoor Young Voices
Hester Watson – West Somerset Community Land Trust

Item 17: **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

Item 18: **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions, comments or statements submitted at the meeting.

Item 19: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record by those present.

Item 20: **Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting**

There were no updates or actions to be discussed, that did not occur in later agenda items.

Item 21: **LCN Exmoor Highways Pilot**

- **An update on the Exmoor Ravine Land Slippage;**

A printed summary of the Roundwaters Retaining Wall Scheme and a Q&A sheet was distributed at the meeting. A lot of concern was expressed by those present on the timeline, and who the preferred contractor was likely to be.

Some slippage was reported, and it now looks likely that the work will commence in January 2024.

As the contract was currently out to tender, the preferred contractor had yet to be selected. This would be subject to a scoring process which would look at logistics as well as costs.

It was vitally important however, that essential vegetation clearance to prepare the site for the work takes place in October 2023. There is a very narrow window of opportunity for this ecology work and BT Openreach to co-ordinate and operate under a full road closure. The Highways Team agreed that it would also be useful to start working on the diversionary routes in preparation for

this event.

It was reported that when the preferred contractor has been selected, and the timeline is confirmed, that a public meeting could be held with all parties to relay the information.

Further information can be obtained from Bridges@somerset.gov.uk.

- **To review the membership of the Highways Sub-group;**

Currently as follows:-

Cllr Steven Pugsley	(Chair)
Cllr Mike Ellicott ENPA)	(Vice Chair /
Cllr Frances Nicholson Council)	(Somerset
Cllrs Roger Foxwell / Jeremy Hickman	(Hill - Top
reps)	
Cllr Andrew Bray	(Vale rep)
Sarah Buchanan (Clerk)	(Brendan
Hills rep)	
Cllr Christine Dubery	(Dulverton Town
rep)	

Representatives from Somerset Council Highways
Andrew Turner Kevin Bridgwater Kali Martin
Bev Norman Luke Green/Ryan Chamberlain Kate
Brown
Craig Gowan.

There were no requests to change the group at the present time.

- **To accept the recommendations of the meeting held on Thursday 3 August in respect of the Devolved Funding Requests;**

Sam Murrell provided an update on the Highways Devolved Funding project as laid out in the agenda pack. It was requested that the LCN approve the recommendations made at the meeting with a show of

hands.

- 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 subcontractor –

APPROVED.

- On receipt of the results of the survey to evaluate which jetting/ gully emptying requests can be progressed by Dulverton Town Council – **APPROVED.**

- 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 – **APPROVED.**

John Levenson (Cutcombe PC) proposed to accept the recommendations and was supported by all parishes in the room.

- **To confirm frequency and meeting dates of future Highway Sub-group meetings.**

To be confirmed at the next Highways sub-group meeting which is scheduled for Friday 22 September at the Dulverton Sports Pavilion,

Update on Temporary Event Notice Fees (TENS)

Cllr Nicholson advised that due to changes in legislation and escalating printing costs, the charges for advertising Road Closures had dramatically increased. It would be a sensible approach for several parishes to advertise their TEN collectively and split the fee, rather than each pay separately. It was something to consider with the Christmas events programme about to start.

- Item 22: **To set up additional sub-groups for emerging Local Community Network Priorities**

Kate Hellard presented a series of slides highlighting some of the statistics and data available to support the emerging themes

and topics.

[The slide pack and information can be viewed on this link.](#)

Following the presentation, it was agreed that the additional sub-groups to be formed would concentrate on (Affordable) Housing and Economic Regeneration. Inaugural meeting invitations will be sent out soon, and then the pattern of meetings going forward would be in the same format as the Highways pilot. (Meeting approximately every 6 weeks and falling between the main LCN meeting). The following people initially identified as members of these sub-groups:-

(Affordable) Housing

Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)

Cllr Mike Ellicott (Vice Chair)

Cllr Frances Nicholson

Will Lock (Exmoor Young Voices)

Rev David Weir (Exmoor Benefice)

Eric Norman (Cutcombe PC)

Stephen Kimsey (Huishchampflower PC)

Vacant – to be filled – (A Vale Rep)

Vacant – to be filled – (A Rep for the South of the Moor)

Advisory – Colin McDonald (SC),

Advisory - Dean Kinsella (ENPA)

It was recognised that there were several different housing groups and platforms already operating on Exmoor. It was important that the work undertaken by the Housing sub-group complimented and worked alongside this, rather than duplicating what was already taking place.

Economic Regeneration

Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)

Cllr Mike Ellicott (Vice Chair)

Cllr Frances Nicholson

Julian Saltau – (Withypool & Hawkridge PC)

Jon Levenson (Cutcombe PC)

Katherine Williams (Exmoor Hill Farming Network)

Vacant – to be filled – (A Vale Rep)

*Vacant – to be filled – (A Rep for the South of the Moor)
Will Lock (Exmoor Young Voices) to attend the inaugural
meeting*

Advisory – Beccy Brown (SC)

Advisory – Dan James (ENPA)

It was requested that members present in the room report back to their respective parishes and organisations about filling the gaps. It was important that representation on the sub-groups was reflective of the whole of Exmoor, and that the workload was adequately spread.

Advisory members and guest participants would change as the work evolved.

Item 23: **Avon and Somerset Police Report**

Avon & Somerset Police (ASP) PCSO Supervisor Katherine Williams and PCSO Michelle Haines were in attendance from the Exmoor Neighbourhood Policing Team.

They presented their update as follows:-

Since the last meeting in June the team has said goodbye to PS Kat Forrest and has been joined by PS John O'Connor.

Crime figures have been relatively low. However, a roundup of crime is:

- 2 non dwelling break ins at farms (Brompton Ralph & Dulverton),
- A garage broken into at Allerford and a shed and stable broken into at Wootton Courtney,
- A vehicle was stolen from Winsford.
- There was an assault in Dulverton (currently under investigation).

There was only one report of a vehicle being broken into over the summer at Dunkery Beacon – far fewer than summer 2022. This followed proactive visits in April to campsites and accommodation providers with leaflets to be given to visitors

reminding them not to leave valuables in their vehicles when visiting various beauty spots.

ASP have continued with “Op Landlike” alongside colleagues from Devon & Cornwall Police promoting all aspects of road safety on the moor with proactive days at various locations. Exmoor National Park Authority has worked with PC Dan Cox, traffic officers and mounted officers visiting various towns and local shows to spread the message. It has been well received by the public resulting in positive feedback.

ASP have visited various events offering cycle marking and crime reduction advice and organised a community event with help from the Exmoor Rangers at Dunster. This was after a period of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and worked well in bringing the community together.

The Team visited all local schools to deliver the “clever never goes” package (modern version of Stranger Danger) in time for the summer break. From next week, the local ASP team will be working with children from Cutcombe, Exford and Timberscombe to deliver the mini police programme.

The ASP team has continued with their monthly visits to Cutcombe market and have been actively promoting Farm/Horse Watch – signing up 12 new members at the Exford show alone.

The Exmoor Neighbourhood team has just secured another 50 selectaDNA kits to take out to victims of crime and hope to provide a further trailer marking event at Cutcombe.

They also provided details of an online Disability Hate Crime Event. (Flyer details attached).

Question

Cllr Colin Wilkins (Winsford PC) reported that at a recent Hunt meet, there had been a number of hunt followers riding quadbikes in an anti-social manner and generally being disruptive. They were making a lot of noise, revving their engines and shouting very early in the morning.

Answer

The ASP Rural Affairs Unit are working closely with all the local

hunts and are monitoring parking, road safety and the anti-social behaviour from both hunt followers and saboteurs. If members of the public have any concerns, they need to report them to the [Rural Affairs Unit](#).

Item 24: **Exmoor National Park Authority Report**

Dean Kinsella, Head of Planning & Sustainable Development at ENPA provided an update on current issues in the National Park.

- A Government consultation was currently being undertaken on proposed planning changes. This covers additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets and open prisons; and a call for evidence on nature-based solutions, farm efficiency projects and diversification.

The link to the Government website can be found here:-
[Consultation on additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets and open prisons; and a call for evidence on nature-based solutions, farm efficiency projects and diversification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

- The ENPA Dark Skies Festival is now open for booking and is exceeding expectations. A link to the press release can be found [here](#).

Item 25: **Any other Business**

Cllr Roger Foxwell (Cutcombe PC) advised that that a consultation had been launched on the proposed plans for a housing development alongside The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe.

Polden Planning is asking the local community to comment on their affordable housing development in Wheddon Cross and Cutcombe.

The consultation can be found by clicking this link:
www.poldenplanning.co.uk/consultations/dunkeryview

Make sure you are registered on Homefinder Somerset to be included <https://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk/choice/>

A drop in event is due to be held at the Moorland Hall on Wednesday 27th September 2023, between 4pm – 8pm.

Item 26: **Dates for Future Meetings.**

Invitations to those that had been selected to serve on the working groups, will be sent out shortly to set up the inaugural meetings.

Exmoor LCN Meetings at the Moorland Hall, Cutcombe

Thursday 9 November 2024 at 7pm

Thursday 11 January 2024 at 7pm

Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7pm

Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7pm

Agendas and report packs will be published in the week before the meeting and will be available to view on the Council's website.

Exmoor Highways sub-group meeting

Friday 22 September at 10am at Dulverton Sports Pavilion.

Contact officer for meeting: Sam Murrell sam.murrell@somerset.gov.uk.