

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Taunton

Date: Thursday, 30 November 2023

Time: 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm

Location: Trull Memorial Hall, 21 Church Rd, Trull, Taunton TA3 7JZ

Chaired by: Dawn Johnson (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Lee Baker	Somerset Council
Tom Deakin	Somerset Council
John Hunt	Somerset Council
Liz Leyshon	Somerset Council
Andy Sully	Somerset Council
Patricia Bainbridge	Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council
Tessa Dean	Trull Parish Council
Bev Fernandes	Taunton Town Council
Nick Fernandes	
Richard Holt	CICCIC
Joanna Lewin-Harris	Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council
Andrew Pritchard	Mind in Somerset

Vicky Robins

Brewhouse Theatre Group

Martin Straus

Taunton Town Council

Tony Taylor

Bishop's Hull Parish Council

Graham Withnell

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Officer attendance:

Name:

Representing

Emma Plummer

Somerset Council

Pippa Hughes

Somerset Council

Josh Barrett

Somerset Council

Lee Willment

Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:

Representing

Nicola Dawson

Member of the Public

Virtual attendees:

Name:

Representing

Dixie Darch

Somerset Council

Caroline Ellis

Somerset Council

Janet Gobey

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Clerk

Nigel Pearce

Taunton Chamber of Commerce

Iain Porter

Quantock AONB

Dawn Rogers

Somerset Council

Sharon Baker

Avon and Somerset Police

Adrian Coucher

Cotford St Luke Parish Council

Chris Mann	Milverton Parish Council
Clive Martin	Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council
Mike Palmer	Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Simon Coles	Somerset Council
Habib Farbahi	Somerset Council
Mike Rigby	Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

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

Item 19: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Simon Coles, Phillip Durbin – Bishops Lydeard Residents Action Group, Councillor Habib Farbahi, Nigel Pearce – Chamber of Commerce, Councillor Mike Rigby and Paul Smith – Taunton Town Football Club.

Item 20: Declarations of Interest

Somerset Councillors present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor of a Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority: -

Somerset Councillor

Lee Baker – Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council
Tom Deakin – Taunton Town Council
Caroline Ellis– Taunton Town Council
John Hunt – Bishops Hull Parish Council

Item 21: Notes from the Previous Meeting

The members of the Taunton Local Community Network agreed

that the notes from the previous meeting held on 28th September 2023 were a correct record.

Item 22: **Presentation from Charles Biscoe about Local Active Travel Plans**

Due to a delay in Councillor Liz Leyshon attendance, the agenda was changed on the day and will not reflect that of the original agenda sent out. This was in agreement with the Chair.

Charles Biscoe, Chair of Grand Western Greenway Association presented an update about Local Active Travel Plans and the plan for an active travel route between Wellington and Taunton. A summary of the points raised in his presentation can be found below:

- Greenway Cycle Routes was set up by engineer John Grimshaw, who built the Bath to Bristol cycle path which is used for around 400,000 journeys a year.
- The route would follow the Great Western Canal, then the railway line from Nynhead to Wellington.
- The path would link two town centres with a traffic free route.
- It would provide 7.5 miles of safe traffic free space for exercise and recreation.
- Provides commercial benefits for new and existing businesses.
- The greenway is completely flat making it a more inclusive travel path.

After the presentation, the members of the LCN discussed the following topics and questions:

- The amount of money the project would cost.
- Engagement with landowners.
- The durability of the proposed path to take a large volume of journeys.
- Potential timescale

The LCN were given the email of grandwesterngreenway@gmail.com if any further information or questions were required on the topic.

Item 23: **An update on Somerset Council's current Financial Position**

Councillor Liz Leyshon gave an update on Somerset Council's current financial position. A summarised overview of highlights of the update are below:

- Somerset Council knowingly declared a financial emergency, reflecting the level of concern increasing the pace of work.
- Somerset Council were making progress on the overspend for the current financial year.
- Somerset Council were actively trying to set a budget for 2024/25 which avoided actioning a section 114 notice.
- A big factor in the budget gap was the large rise in care home fees as well as placements and transport in children's services.
- Somerset Council were currently working through a range of savings proposals that could save around £22m.

After the update from Councillor Liz Leyshon a discussion was had between the members where the following topics were raised:

- Nottingham City Council and their recent section 114.
- Somerset Councils plan to bridge the budget gap for future years.
- Concern from Parish Councils about the devolution project and raising of parish council precept.
- Members reminded of email address devolution@somerset.gov.uk to email any queries regarding this.

Item 24: **Public Question Time**

No public questions were asked.

Item 25: **Feedback from the Young People Working Group meeting on 23rd November**

Councillor Bev Fernandes, Chair of the group gave feedback from the Young People Working Group meeting. This meeting was held on 23rd November 2023 at Taunton Town Football Club. The summarised review of the update is below:

- Current organisations attending included the Somerset Youth Alliance, In the Mix project, Somerset Sports and Activities Partnership, Taunton Youth for Christ, Edventure, Connect Somerset, Taunton Minister.
- Charmaine Dyer from the Violence Reduction Partnership shared findings from a recent survey focussing on the locality of the East Street area of Taunton, undertaken by over 700 11 - 17-year-olds. A snap shot of the patterns that emerged were that 85% of those surveyed visited East Street on Saturdays between 1 and 5 and there was little difference in whether it was summer or winter, to shop or meet friends, 82% of those surveyed visited McDonalds over the weekend, 68% spent weekends with family and friends and only 10% spent time partaking in organised activities, such as football clubs etc. The Partnership will be able to make use of the patterns to put into place different methods of intervention.
- There was a lot of enthusiasm towards the forum from organisations and there are aspirations to take the group countywide.
- The next meeting is in February, the group will continue to identify gaps and work to support young people.

Item 26: **Feedback from any of the parishes/other organisations on any Active projects they are planning, seeking to implement or are underway.**

The following parish councils gave updates on active projects:

- Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council - Cycleway to Taunton has been an aspiration for many years and is always an aspiration.
- Trull Parish Council expressed the need for an active cycle route in the future.
- Cotford St Luke Parish Council asked a question around the councils devolution project and when further details would be released to the city/town and parish councils.

Item 27: **Forward planning for future agendas**

The Taunton LCN Members brought up the following topics they would like discussed at future meetings:

- An update from the police
- Economic Development (updates from a variety of local businesses)
- Flood Protection and Prevention
- Public Transport
- Sport and Recreation

The next meeting is Monday 5th February 2024 18:30 – 20:30, at the Minster, Taunton, TA1 1SA.

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