

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Shepton

Date: Wednesday, 18 October 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.38 pm

Location: Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall, Zion Hill, Oakhill, BA3 5AN

Chaired by: Cllr Philip Ham

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Barry Clarke	Somerset Council
Cllr Philip Ham	Somerset Council
Cllr Martin Lovell	Somerset Council
Cllr Claire Sully	Somerset Council
Ashwick Parish Council	
Batcombe Parish Council	
Coleford Parish Council	
Holcombe Parish Council	
Leigh on Mendip Parish Council	
Pilton Parish Council	
Shepton Mallet Town Council	
Stoke St Michael Parish Council	

Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Edric Hobbs	Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome item:

Item 9: **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Edric Hobbs sent his apologies.

Item 10: **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

Item 11: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The notes from the meeting held on 31 July 2023 were proposed by Councillor Martin Lovell and seconded by Councillor Garfield Kennedy and unanimously agreed.

Item 12: **Public Question Time**

Councillor Matt Harrison, Chair of Shepton Mallet Town Council asked for a follow up on an extensive report the legacy Mendip District Council commissioned about flooding last calendar year.

He asked:

- Who is chasing with Somerset council after this report?
- What is the status of the report?
- What happened to those recommendations made in the report?
- Who is now the owner of those recommendations?

The Chair made a note to ask Somerset Council for an update.

Item 13: **Highlights of the Themes Discussed at the Previous Meeting**

The following highlights and themes were discussed from the last meeting:

- Highways
- Planning Policy
- Community Facilities
- Road Safety
- Active Travel
- Transport
- Climate and Environment
- Affordable Housing
- Business Support
- Planning Enforcement
- Anti-Social behaviour and fear of crime

Item 14: **Community Plans Presentation**

The Chair invited Ian Kirby from Leigh on Mendip to present the community plan in Libby Merricks absence.

He confirmed that there was an original plan which dated back to 2006. He mentioned that an organization called Smarter Communities had helped to compile this plan from a list of questions to which they logged the responses.

He further went on to explain that Smarter Communities detailed a marketing plan setting out how they were going to engage with the community which included teenagers through to older people.

Social Media was used to publicise it. Village Hall open days were also used if people did not have online access as people were able to go there and be asked the questions in person.

After the responses were received, the results were analysed and from that an executive summary was developed which discussed each topic with an action plan.

Mr Kirby further explained that this was going to be brought to the Parish in November.

He further confirmed that issues such as Bonfire Night and Halloween, which brought the borough villages together were on the plan as well as transportation, planning development and Health & wellbeing.

He mentioned that the plan was well structured and worth it as it allowed the community to come together and give feedback on what was important.

It was agreed that this concept had also been successful in other towns such as Coleford and it was mentioned that there was a lot of interest in wind and solar farms and that Coleford was having an application drawn up for this. Mary Pearce confirmed that their plans could be used as evidence for plans elsewhere.

The issue of a better bus service was mentioned as it impacted on residents significantly.

The Chair confirmed that using Smarter Communities was free.

It was confirmed that the 30th November 2023 was the deadline date to establish an interest in it.

Then there will be 12 months to prepare and bring the survey through analysis to an Action Plan. Initially focussing on making sure the questions are absolutely correct. After that the CSS team, Catherine Armstrong, will do the analysis and write up the reports. This then goes back to the committee to look at and analyse the data and develop action plans.

There are video tutorials and training sessions in support.

SALC (Somerset Association of Local Councils) can be contacted for the information.

Item 15: **An Introduction to our Data**

Tim Cook, from the LCN team, presented the report highlighting the statistical data. He mentioned that the statistics were based on an averages interpretation and there was a key to explain

these statistics.

He went on to explain that the approach was to use the intelligence team at Somerset Council and profile data on a thematic analysis model.

He further confirmed that various surveys had been done. The LCN team would circulate that email and the answers to any questions and the email address will be sent out in the summary.

The Vice Chair pointed out that the domain experts needed to come to the LCN meetings.

Councillor Garfield Kennedy asked about the social housing report which was drawn up at the legacy Mendip District Council. He asked for a follow up on the report to ascertain at what stage it was at. He stated that there were statistics in that report about Shepton Mallet, such as the need for affordable housing being greater there than other places in Somerset.

The Vice Chair confirmed that in a Homefinder briefing which was held recently they were assured that the intention was to brief the town Councils and Parishes about housing.

Item 16: **Discussion 1**

Tim Cook advised members to work in small groups to identify their top 3 themes and then to add specifics of the issues, what information was needed about the issue and who could help with them.

They also needed to identify what they needed to ask residents and what examples of best practice were already in use. He further asked them to record these on the flip chart paper provided.

The following 3 issues were recorded by members: Road safety, Housing/Planning, climate and the environment.

Road safety

- no enforcement
- traffic incidents needed to be reported in order to collect data

for enforcement. This included near misses.

- Alternative to using cars, example, for school runs
- cars parked in dangerous places
 - on pavements
 - double yellow lines
 - signs were outdated
 - there were too many signs in one place to read effectively
- speeding
- potholes
- grit
- a question was asked whether Somerset Council would look at obtaining an area away from the villages for HGVs (heavy goods vehicle) in order for them to be diverted other than going through the villages. Would it be possible to put all these places together and create one 'industrial' site which is accessible by HGVs and pull them out of villages?
- better public transport was suggested here

Housing – Planning Policy

- deliver affordable housing
 - speak to developers
 - Homefinder
 - Sydenham Estate (Homes in Sedgemoor)
 - more focus on affordable housing and not social housing
 - focus on community facilities – the loss of Shepton Mallet leisure centre was a loss for a wider area. What was the impact?
 - continue to protect libraries
- can unlock potential s106 money for other community needs
- contributions can be made toward facilities and transport
- freight
 - clear large lorries using cars satnav

Climate and environment

- energy efficiency
 - solar
 - guide people on how to help people to come away from oil
- Biodiversity
 - Protect green spaces - create habitat not destroy it

Robin Horton asked what was the next step after these 3 to focus on.

Item 17: **Discussion 2**

The Vice chair suggested that case studies needed to be brought to the LCN.

She explained that the views of residents be gathered and this data analysed for action to take place. The heart of this would be the Parish Councils.

She stated that who was going to pay for the initiatives needed to be explored and solutions found such as fundraising for 50% of the project and funding from Council for the rest.

After some deliberations, the Chair agreed that neighbouring LCNs can work together. Councillor Barry Clark agreed that this may work for the resurfacing of Old Frome Road.

The links between focal points between villages and multi user paths were mentioned. It was suggested that these paths also had the potential to make money, such as rentals of electric bikes. The point was raised that multi user paths could reach to Evercreech, Radstock, and as far as Bath. An infrastructure was needed to do this.

Item 18: **Dates for Future Meetings**

Dates and times of future meetings:

14 December 2023 – 7pm

26 February 2024 – 7pm

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

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