

## **Local Community Network Meeting Notes**

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Hestercombe

Date: Wednesday, 21 February 2024

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.54 pm

Location: Online

Chaired by: Stuart Haskins (West Monkton Parish Council) (Chair)

### **LCN core membership attendance:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Norman Cavill (Vice-Chair)	Somerset Council
Alan Bradford	Somerset Council
Dixie Darch	Somerset Council
David Fothergill	Somerset Council
Katie Gibbins	Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Amy Shepherd	West Monkton Parish Council
Phillip Spencer	North Petherton Parish Council
Julian Taylor	North Petherton Town Council
Ray Tully	North Pethertown Town Council
Doug Wilson	Broomfield Parish Council
Tracy Evans	North Petherton RFC
Kieran Roe	Creech St Michael Parish Council

### **Officer attendance:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Emmaline Kay	Somerset Council
Kate Hellard	Somerset Council
Max Perry	Somerset Council

### **Other attendees:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Hannah Snowdon	Somerset Youth Work Alliance
Tina Talbot	Spark Somerset
Andrew Pritchard	Mind in Somerset

### **Summary of discussion:**

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

Item 26: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lee Baker, Cllr Tom Deakin, Cllr Bill Revans, Tash Scully (Somerset Youth Work Alliance), Iain Porter (Quantock Hills National Landscape) and Paul Townsend (Kingston St Mary Parish Council).

Item 27: **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Norman Cavill declared that FWAG are looking at his land.

Item 28: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

An amendment was proposed and agreed to the previous notes for the item Updates from Flood Resilience Meeting (20th October):

It was noted that there had been a significant reduction in the EA maintenance budget for the Wessex Region, including Somerset.

The rivers still needed dredging and the banks maintained. The river channels are narrowing and trees growing in the banks.

It was recognised that there were two separate areas and that natural flood management on the Quantocks would have very little impact on flooding events on the moors.

Item 29: **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

Item 30: **Highway Maintenance - Working Group**

The LCN were informed about the possibility of starting a Highway Working Group, which enables them to have conversations with Highways about upcoming works, issues in the area and planning for the future, as well as how this links in with the highway steward scheme and the flexibility of the options available to them.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- For the pilot in Exmoor that was funded by Somerset Council, do we know the cost? *The cost of the working group is only a parish hosting a meeting once a quarter and teas and coffees.*
- Exmoor are likely to pause the highway steward – do we know why? *The funding from Somerset Council is coming to an end, they are looking at other sources of funding but a final decision has not been made yet.*
- What does the £50,000 budget for a highway steward include? *The budget includes the person working as a highway steward and accompany resources to do*

*maintenance on the roads. They can cut back hedgerows, do enhanced grass cutting, address surface water, and straightforward gully clearance. For more significant works, Highways are putting together a price list.*

- There's only one solution – the highway steward – being offered, so it is difficult to compare the value of it. *That is the benefit of the working group, it provides the opportunity to explore other solutions.*
- Roads are in a very poor state and are deteriorating, and need serious maintenance before they can look at options like a Highway Steward. The £50,000 budget for them won't go far enough.
- When there are diversions on major roads, they lanes become blocked or impassable as they are used as alternatives. It is a safety issue.
- North Petherton has included in their budget a further £160,000 partly dedicated to road works and general grass cutting. They have not yet commissioned a steward or decided exactly what the money will be used for.
- A working group for interested parishes will make sure there is value for money. It would give the opportunity to get into the issues in depth and why they haven't been resolved, and potentially further explore the highway steward scheme.
- Have met highways stewards looking at drainage issues reported years ago, but there is a lack of funding. Unless road issues are a safety issue, there is no chance of them being addressed.
- Farmers already have the equipment, could they be paid to improve roads? *Limited budget would make this a strain too.*
- Last week two cars were overturned on the A38 through North Petherton, and as there are frequent motorway closures where the A38 is the diversion it creates difficulties, particularly at narrow chokepoints. Is the Department for Transport responsible? *No, it is a Somerset Highways road. We are hearing from Monkton Heathfield that a downgrade of that road is inevitable.*
- Durston would want to be involved with this as they also have roads, but their precept is very small.
- Kingston St Mary would be interested in the working group, it's an opportunity to develop a mutual

understanding between highways and communities perspective, understand the criteria for prioritisation and what are the challenges?

- The Institute of Civil Engineers have highlighted the impact of climate change on road infrastructure – has already caused increased costs as the impact of water and extreme weather is very damaging on the roads. Every time there is a flood episode, more damage is done. In Kingston there are narrow lanes with ditches and banks on the side, tractors going down them causing damage.
- Is there more traffic in Broomfield due to Hinkley Point?  
*We think so but we don't have the numbers.*

LCN members were asked to contact Emmaline Kay in order to register their interest to join the highway maintenance working group.

Item 31: **Action and next steps for Youth Provision**

The LCN received information on local youth provision from the Connect Somerset Champion, and detail about what that work involved. They also learned about the work the Somerset Youth Work Alliance are doing and the need for funding for provision by the Community Youth Project.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- There is a need for wider information on youth provision, as groups like Scouts and Brownies are not included. *A lot of this bleeds into adjacent LCNs, and young people will often cross the LCN borders to access provision. We need to look at how we can join up with other LCNs to map them.*
- Why are some of the schools included on the list? *LCN geography doesn't match up exactly with Connect Somerset geography, as they follow Primary Care Network boundaries.*
- There are also private schools not included.
- There is a need to cascade to schools what youth provision is available.
- How do you work independently, informally, with young people who have different sorts of needs but are

alienated and lack meaningful relationships with adults?  
*Some young people have gone on to get qualifications so they can support young people, that's the sustainable way to move forward.*

- Is there a place where parents and young people can go to find out what's going on? *There is an app called tellmi – available at [tellme.help](http://tellme.help), which has an offer of peer support and early intervention, and has a database of youth organisations. SPARK Somerset have also done work on this in some areas.*
- As part of the mapping process, the youth work alliance hope to have a young person led directory online.
- What about children under 12 rather than young people? *Taunton LCN has created a subgroup with lots of interested providers – Taunton has denser clusters and groups. Would be useful to get input from schools, nursery providers, etc.*
- The best people to tell what their needs are are children, young people, and their parents. Perhaps we can cascade a questionnaire that parishes can support with.
- If there's appetite, a working group can get into the detail of some of these things.
- How big of an issue does it seem to be in your parish? *Where LCNs feel that there's something missing, a working group has helped speak to young people, identify what's happening and where the gaps are, and if those gaps are genuine or because there is no engagement from young people for that provision.*
- Some provision has been wound up due to lack of volunteers and trustees, rather than lack of interest from children.
- A survey has been done – there were many league sports and children and young people wanted more informal sports where they just play, and café style provision.
- There are areas where there is lots of provision that is joined up.
- People are talking about unwieldy and antisocial behaviour – those at the people that are hard to reach and we need to capture their voices and figure out what's important to them. We should be looking at capturing a wide range of age groups.
- SASP has been doing work with their Moving Mums

group, young mums in groups with children, to get those voices.

- Tapping into individual voices, social media, associated groups, and asking people in the street what would benefit them.
- There is a high level of publicity of concerns at the moment, we need to think about how we address them.
- In Creech St Michael, a youth project with CYP has been running for several years. Young people reported that the youth project was the only space they had to express concerns about wellbeing and mental health. They liked the activities but the safe space to talk about the challenges they face was really important. If we don't find the funding to support it, it will end at the end of March, even though we have facilities and participants.
- There needs to be a way to link needs and resources – there's not enough coordination to know where we are. Some activities don't meet some of the most needy children in our society. Need to do research and mapping on this so people making decisions have the information they need.
- On antisocial behaviour, data was requested on antisocial behaviour but the figures were very low. The perception of antisocial behaviour was higher, but it may be due to adults being antisocial rather than young people.
- Dorset Youth Association created an annual survey sent to all schools asking a variety of questions to get a wide spread of data. All members of the association have access to that data from all of the schools, and coordination means young people were only asked to fill in one survey and everyone had access to the same information. This could be something a working group could work towards.
- In Watford there are lots of problems with youth, need to ask young people what they actually need. Why aren't there any young people in the LCN?
- West Monkton PC run a Community Café at the BACH each Wednesday and also a Stay and Play for Mums and Tots to have a coffee on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

LCN members were asked to contact Emmaline Kay in order to

register their interest to join the youth provision working group.

Item 32: **Discussion Topic - Health and Wellbeing**

The LCN received a presentation from the locality manager for CCS, which manages the agent service of village and community agents. There are 70 agents across Somerset, linked with GP surgeries that take referrals from a variety of sources. They also work with Somerset Carers Service.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- How many staff are there across Somerset? *Just over 100, core staff very small but total is over 100. Vast majority of work is village and community agents.*
- Isolation is one of the biggest issues. There is a once a month café in Kingston St Mary to allow people to connect. Might not be able to measure the preventative impact of this work but it's a huge preventative measure, so thank you for your hard work.
- Talking Cafés in particular are very helpful and have high attendance, especially if people don't have internet and need advice. We ensure talking cafés have internet connection so we can fill in online forms and support people with that.
- Does Bridgwater fall under this? *As it has different areas than the LCN, there is a different locality manager for Bridgwater - Debbie Slater.*
- In West Somerset there's a children's/young person's focused village agent specifically funded by Dulverton. Might be something for the young person's working group to have on their radar.
- How much does it cost to fund an agent? *South Petherton fund a part time village agent, three days a week. Information can be provided regarding cost.*

Item 33: **Dates and topics of future meetings**

There is an Emergency Planning Workshop on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March at Brittons Ash Community Hall.

There was a request for clarity on how many towns and parishes



have an emergency plan in order to shape that meeting, and only Kingston St Mary stated they have one.

The next meeting of the LCN is Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April.  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June follows, which is also the AGM.

There was a request to raise the plan to increase water levels on moors for carbon retention at a future meeting. It is a Natural England and DEFRA initiative and more information will be sought on their engagement process.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team [lcn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lcn@somerset.gov.uk)