

Local Community Network

Avalon and Poldens LCN Main Meeting Notes (AGM) **2nd July 2026, 6.30pm, The Shapwick Pavillion, Northbrook Road,** **Bridgwater, TA7 9LN**

Attendees:

Charlotte Griffin (LCN Link Officer)
Chris Bennetts (Meare PC)
Clare Moody (Police and Crime Commissioner)
David Thomas (Member of Public/Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust)
Fodo Higginson (SALC)
Geoff Barnett (Catcott PC)
Georgia Terry (Cossington PC)
Harry Munt (Somerset Councillor)
Heather Shearer (Somerset Councillor/Street PC/Walton PC)
James Hall (Catcott PC)
John Dodson (Street Neighbourhood Watch Association)
Laura Smedley (Partnerships Officer)
Lindsay MacDougall (Glastonbury TC)
Liz Leyshon (Somerset Councillor)
Nataliya Wills (LCN Link Officer)
Serena Serjeant (Avon and Somerset Police)
Sharon Bond (Meare PC)
Simon Carswell (Somerset Councillor/Street PC)
Simon Jackson (Barton St. David PC)
Stephen Page (Somerset Council/Keinton Mandeville PC)

Apologies:

Graham Croucher (Shapwick PC)
Helen Hutchinson (Neighbourhood Development Manager, NHS)
Jessica Lewin (Connect Somerset)
Mark Wilcox (Connect Somerset)
Sheila Petherbridge (West Pennard/Butleigh PC)

1. Welcome and Annual Report Overview

Charlotte provided an overview of the 2025–2026 Annual Report, reflecting on her first year supporting the LCN since taking over the role in August 2025. She highlighted:

- The importance of the LCN as a forum for local discussion, partnership working and information sharing.

- Engagement with parish councils, Somerset Council colleagues, community organisations and volunteers.
- Support provided during flooding incidents, helping to coordinate communication and connect communities with relevant services.
- Progress made through the Health & Wellbeing and Highways Working Groups.
- Confidence that the LCN has a strong foundation to build upon as changes to community working arrangements are considered.

2. Highways Working Group Update

A summary of activity from the Highways Working Group was provided, including:

- Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme.
- Highways Volunteer Training.
- Agricultural Vehicles sub-group discussions.
- Attendance and input from Avon and Somerset Police.
- Continued partnership work on local highways matters.

Thanks were extended to those involved in leading and supporting the group.

3. Step, Ride, Thrive Update

An update was provided on the Step, Ride, Thrive project.

Key points included:

- A dedicated steering group was established in early 2025.
- Following the Extraordinary Meeting held in June, the project will continue with Glastonbury Town Council.
- Glastonbury Town Council agreed to support an extension of the project with SALC.
- The LCN agreed to step back from direct oversight and focus on other priorities.
- Project outcomes have been captured within the Annual Report.

4. Health & Wellbeing Working Group Update

Following the separation of Step, Ride, Thrive from the Health & Wellbeing Working Group, the group has begun refocusing on wider health priorities.

Feedback from the most recent meeting identified two initial areas for further work:

Priority 1 – Communication of Services

- Reviewing how information about available health and wellbeing services is communicated to residents.
- Exploring ways to improve awareness and access to support.

Priority 2 – Transport and Accessibility

- Reviewing transport provision across the LCN area.
- Considering how transport impacts access to health and wellbeing services, particularly for residents without private transport.

5. Approval of Previous Notes

There were no objections raised to the following notes:

- 23 April meeting
- 3 June Extraordinary Meeting

6. AGM Business – Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- Stephen was elected Chair.
- Chris was elected Vice-Chair.

7. Discussion on LCN Priorities for 2026–2027

Attendees participated in table discussions to identify priorities for the coming year.

Key Themes Raised

Flooding and Flood Resilience

- Flood prevention and mitigation.
- Learning from recent flooding events.
- Interest in understanding Somerset Council's flood resilience funding.
- £50 million DEFRA funding
- Support for river management and pollution initiatives (including Brue).
- Environment Agency - Illegal dumping

Planning

- Greater understanding of planning processes.

- Emerging Local Plan
- Concerns regarding local influence over planning decisions.
- Desire for closer engagement with planning officers.

Community Resilience

- Positive feedback on previous resilience workshops.
- Interest in further emergency planning and resilience events.

Rural Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

- Concerns regarding rural crime.
- Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in town centres.

Parish Council Engagement

- Discussion regarding participation levels within the LCN.
- A desire to strengthen attendance and engagement from parish councils.
- LCN info into unitary council.

Emerging Priority Areas

The strongest themes identified across discussions were:

1. Planning
2. Flooding and Flood Resilience

These were recognised as the most widely supported priorities from the session.

8. Presentation from Police and Crime Commissioner

Clare Moody, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, along with a colleague, attended and provided an overview of her Police and Crime Plan.

Five Strategic Priorities

1. Neighbourhood Policing
2. Reducing Serious Violence
3. Prevention
4. Supporting Victims
5. Standards in Policing

Topics discussed included:

- Increasing visibility of neighbourhood policing.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Shoplifting and retail crime.
- Rural crime.
- Violence against women and girls.
- Youth violence and early intervention.
- Road safety.
- Support for victims of crime.

Questions and Discussion

A substantial discussion followed covering:

- Rural crime reporting and response.
- Farm machinery theft.
- Attendance of police at local meetings.
- Community Speed Watch.
- The importance of crime reporting to help target police resources.
- Communication and feedback from police.
- E-scooter use and enforcement.
- The value of PCSOs and local neighbourhood policing.

9. LCN Review and Community Working Changes

Members raised concerns regarding:

- The ongoing review of Local Community Networks.
- Future governance arrangements.
- Opportunities for communities and long-standing LCN participants to contribute to consultation activity.
- The need for clear communication regarding proposed changes.

Charlotte agreed to seek clarification on consultation opportunities and provide an update to members.

10. Community Grants Update

An update was provided on remaining grant funding available from SALC.

Members were informed that:

- Recent grants had been awarded to projects in Walton and Stawell.
- Funding remained available for eligible community projects.
- Applications could be processed quickly.
- Remaining funds need to be allocated by September.

11. Date of Next Meeting