



# Local Community Network

## Levels and Moors LCN Meeting Notes - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026, held on Teams

Chaired by Sean Dromgoole (Chair of L and M LCN and Langport)

### Attendees:

- **Cllr Stephen Page (Somerset Councillor)**
- **Cllr Richard Wilkins (Somerset Councillor)**
- Gerard Tucker (Aller and Chair of L and M Active Travel)
- David Vigar (High Ham)
- Paul Baker (Middlezoy)
- Andrew Flower (Muchelney)
- Mike Dennis (North Curry)
- Marion Dethier (Chedzoy)
- Liz Parfitt (Westonzoyland)
- Lorraine Vawn Davis (Isle Abbots)
- Julia Gadd (Huish Episcopi)
- Nancy Green (High Ham)
- Geoff Walker (Compton Dundon)
- Grace Salter Haskins (Lyng)
- Will Wilke-Wood (Curry Mallet)
- Mark Stanistreet (Pitney)
- Philip Sharatt (A Somerset Pilgrimage)
- Emily Parkin (Avon & Somerset Police – SW ROCU)
- Alex Murphy (Young Somerset)
- Will Mason-Wilkes (University of Birmingham – RESCUE drone project)
- Donna Parkes (Somerset Council – Advanced Practitioner)
- Fodo Higginson (SALC)
  
- James Moore (Somerset Council - Link Officer)
- Chris Booth (Somerset Council - Link Officer)

### Apologies:

- **Cllr Mike Stanton (Somerset Councillor)**
- **Cllr Jo Roundell Greene (Somerset Councillor)**
- **Cllr Tim Kerley (Somerset Councillor)**
- Marcus Hembrow (Curry Rivel and Chair of L and M Highways)
- Paul Helyer (Martock)
- Phil Stone (North Curry)

- Xanthe Waite (RSPB and Landscape Recovery)
- Sarah Potepa (member of the public)

## 1. Welcome and Approval of AGM Notes

Previous meeting notes accepted and no edits suggested.

## 2. Fraud Awareness and Prevention in Somerset

Emily Parkin from the South West Regional Organised Crime Unit delivered a presentation on the prevalence of fraud in Somerset, types of scams, reporting mechanisms, and available support, followed by a detailed Q&A session addressing local concerns and practical advice.

- Types of Fraud in Somerset: Emily outlined the most common and harmful types of fraud affecting Somerset, including online shopping fraud, investment fraud, pension fraud, romance fraud, and doorstep crime. She highlighted that rural areas experience high rates of courier and romance fraud, with victims often less likely to report incidents due to shame or embarrassment.
- Reporting and Support Mechanisms: Emily explained the transition from Action Fraud to the new Report Fraud platform, detailing the steps for victims: contacting their bank via 159, updating passwords, reporting through [reportfraud.police.uk](https://reportfraud.police.uk), and receiving reference numbers for claims. She emphasised the importance of logging concerns and using available resources such as Victim Support, Age UK, and the National Debtline.
- Community Engagement and Education: In response to questions, Emily described the work of local and regional fraud protect teams, including talks at schools, nursing homes, and community events. She introduced Project Rook, a pilot educational programme for schools, and discussed the potential for further outreach in parishes and warm spaces.
- Evolving Fraud Tactics and AI Threats: Emily spoke about the increasing sophistication of scams, including the use of AI and deepfakes. She advised on using safe words for verification, being cautious with emails and texts, and always contacting banks via official numbers. She noted the challenges in keeping up with technological advances in fraud.

- Practical Prevention Advice: Emily provided practical steps for fraud prevention, such as verifying IDs, registering with the Telephone Preference Service, not paying cash upfront for home repairs, and empowering victims to report fraud without shame. She also discussed the importance of digital literacy and the need for ongoing community education.

*Emily can be contacted at:*

01278 644444

[Emily.Parkin@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Emily.Parkin@avonandsomerset.police.uk)

SW ROCU, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ

### 3. Independent Living Centres and Occupational Therapy Services

Donna Parkes, supported by Chris, presented to attendees about the Somerset Independent Living Centres, their preventive approach to adult social care, referral processes, case studies, and cost-saving outcomes, followed by a discussion on equipment funding and accessibility.

- **Service Overview and Expansion:** Donna explained that there are currently three Independent Living Centres in Somerset (Shepton, Taunton, Yeovil), with plans to open a fourth in Bridgewater. The centres focus on prevention and early intervention for adults with stable long-term conditions, aiming to reduce dependence on care services.
- **Referral and Assessment Process:** Clients can self-refer or be referred by professionals, charities, or volunteers. The process includes an appointment, home measurement sheet, and the opportunity to try equipment on-site. The service provides immediate advice and action plans, with follow-up for those unable to attend the centres.
- **Case Studies and Equipment Provision:** Donna shared anonymised case studies illustrating the range of support provided, such as housing assessments, bathing aids, bed access solutions, assistive technology, and sensory loss support. Most equipment is loaned, with some small aids requiring purchase, and special orders are possible for high-risk cases.

- **Cost Savings and Outcomes:** The service tracks cost avoidance, reporting approximately £9.2 million saved in care packages since inception. Outcomes include reduced A&E admissions, delayed moves to supported care, and prevention of informal carer breakdowns. Feedback scores remain high, and the centres also serve as training venues.
- **Funding and Accessibility Challenges:** Donna clarified that while most equipment is loaned, the service collaborates with village agents and community agents to identify charitable funding for those in financial hardship. Special orders are possible when clinically justified, and the service seeks to promote accessibility and awareness through local partnerships.

*Queries or to arrange professional visits:*

[SILCYeovil@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SILCYeovil@somerset.gov.uk)

[SILCShepton@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SILCShepton@somerset.gov.uk)

[SILCTaunton@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SILCTaunton@somerset.gov.uk)

*More information on the council website:*

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/equipment-to-help-you>

#### **4. People, Places, and Things Project:**

Sean led the discussion on the development, funding, and future of the 'People, Places, and Things' directory, a resource listing local activities to combat loneliness, including current usage, funding constraints, and strategies for expansion.

- **Project Purpose and Current Status:** Sean explained that the project aims to compile a comprehensive list of local activities and resources to address loneliness. The initial version is a spreadsheet, with plans to develop a website or app if usage and demand justify further investment.
- **Funding and Sustainability:** Fodo outlined the grant funding history, current limitations, and requirements for

future funding, including the need for a robust plan and multi-council commitment. The grant programme is closing, with only limited funds available for small parishes, and any expansion must be completed by September.

- **Community Engagement and Expansion Ideas:** It was suggested involving housing developers in distributing welcome packs and linking activities with transport options like the Slinky service. Gerard proposed preparing a news release for parishes to raise awareness, and Sean emphasised the need for councils to use and contribute to the resource.
- **Next Steps and Actions:** The group agreed to trial the resource, gather feedback, and consider a phased approach to expansion. Sean, Phil, and Gerard will prepare communications materials, and Chris will distribute relevant links and contact information to support further engagement.

*Please see attached spreadsheet relating to collated information.*

Fodo informed attendees about ongoing opportunities for small parishes to access community health and well-being funding, encouraged direct contact for project support, and clarified the scope and limitations of available grants.

- **Small Project Funding:** Fodo explained that parishes with populations under 1,000 can still apply for small grants for community projects, and offered support for event planning, fundraising, and community plans. Contact details and slides will be circulated to facilitate access.

You can find out more here: [Programme Resources & Grant Applications - The Somerset Association of Local Councils \(SALC\)](#)

## **5. Active Travel and Highways Maintenance Issues:**

The meeting discussed progress and setbacks in active travel initiatives, disappointment over Somerset Council's selection of quiet lane routes, and ongoing concerns about highways maintenance, including the reliability of the new works map and gully cleaning.

- **Active Travel Progress and Disappointments:** Gerard reported positive

developments in local walking and cycling projects, including the establishment of a community interest organisation and plans for route improvements. However, he expressed strong disappointment that the group's proposed rural quiet lane was not selected by Somerset Council, with decisions perceived as favouring urban routes.

- **Group Response and Advocacy:** Sean proposed, with group support, to write a letter of complaint to Somerset Council and the transport team, expressing concern over the exclusion of rural routes and lack of consultation. The group agreed this action was representative and necessary.
- **Highways Maintenance Scheme Experiences:** Sean raised points by Marcus emailed before the meeting about the enhanced highways maintenance scheme and the new annual works map. Few parishes had used the scheme, citing high costs and operational challenges. The group discussed the reliability of the works map, with several members reporting discrepancies between reported and actual gully cleaning.
- **Parish Feedback and Best Practices:** Parish representatives shared experiences of unmaintained roads, difficulties in verifying contractor work, and the need for better communication and notification. Suggestions included sharing best practices for parish-led maintenance and advocating for more collaborative approaches with Somerset Council.

*Maintenance map can be found here: [iShare Spotlight Focus](#)*

## **6. Future Flight Social Science Research on Drones:**

Will Mason-Wilks from the University of Birmingham presented a research project with collaboration with Somerset Council on community attitudes towards the use of drones for environmental monitoring in Somerset, inviting participation in upcoming consultation meetings and addressing regulatory, landowner, and ecological concerns.

- **Project Overview and Objectives:** Will explained the research aims to understand local community perspectives on the use of advanced drones for

environmental monitoring, such as flood assessment and asset management, as these technologies approach wider deployment in Somerset.

- **Consultation Meetings and Participation:** A series of community consultation meetings are scheduled, with participants offered vouchers or charity donations. Will requested help in publicising the sessions and welcomed suggestions for additional stakeholders, including landowners and ecological groups.
- **Regulatory and Landowner Issues:** Lorraine and Elisabeth raised questions about airspace restrictions near military sites, legalities of overflying private land, and the rights of agencies to use drones. Will clarified that regulations are complex and evolving, with ongoing trials addressing these challenges in coordination with the Civil Aviation Authority and other bodies.
- **Ecological and Livestock Concerns:** Sean and David highlighted potential impacts on wildlife and livestock, referencing local ecological projects and farmers' concerns. Will acknowledged these as key issues, noting limited current data and the importance of including these perspectives in the research.

## Actions Summary

- See Annex A

## Next Meetings

The dates and locations of the next Levels and Moors LCN meetings are (they are subject to change based on officer availability)

### Main LCN Meeting

- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026, Edgar Hall, Somerton - 7pm
- 25<sup>th</sup> June, The Charltons Community Centre - 5:30pm

### Active Travel Working Group dates:

- 19<sup>th</sup> February, Langport Town Hall - 7pm

### Highways Working Groups dates

- 11<sup>th</sup> March, Curry Rivel Village Hall - 10am
- 11<sup>th</sup> June, online