

Minehead and Watchet LCN Highways Online Meeting – 13 May 2026

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Meeting notes:

MINEHEAD AND WATCHET – HIGHWAYS SUB-GROUP

Wednesday 13 May 2026 (online only)

In attendance:

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker (Chair)	Carhampton Parish Council
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	Somerset Council
Cllr Cara Strom	Somerset Council
Cllr Marcus Kravis	Somerset Council
Cllr Mick De'Ath	Old Cleeve Parish Council
John Richards	WACET
Cllr John Irlen	Watchet Town Council
Cllr Loretta Whetlor	Watchet TC/ Williton PC / SALC
Cllr Mark Philipson	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Matthew Scriven	Sc Highways Maintenance Manager
Kali Martin	SC Highway Maintenance
Katherine Tyson / Sam Turnidge	SC Traffic Management
Ryan Chamberlain	SC Streetworks
Lorraine Warren	Kier
Sam Murrell (LCN Link Officer)	Minehead & Watchet / Exmoor LCNs

1. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves online.

Apologies from: Cllr Andy Hadley, Cllr Hugh Davies, Mike O'Dowd-Jones; (Matthew Scriven attended in his place), Cllr Tracey Skinner (Sampford Brett PC), Cllrs Steve Harris (Dunster) and Tony Brooks (Crowcombe) – arrived in person

2. Agree the minutes taken on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

Chair asked if everyone was happy with the minutes; minutes were agreed for onward submission to the full LCN meeting.

3. B3191 – Update

- Matthew Scriven updated the group on Somerset Council's Structures Fund bid for coastal protection, cliff stabilisation and realignment of the B3191 at Cleeve Hill.
- Members welcomed progress but raised concerns about limited early engagement with local councillors, parish and town councils, and the LCN.
- It was noted that the B3191 is a wider West Somerset issue affecting tourism, access and local connectivity.

- Members stressed the need to align the proposal with coastal adaptation and current geotechnical evidence.
- Support was expressed for a dedicated follow-up meeting with relevant officers and stakeholders.

Despite concerns, attendees broadly:

- **Welcomed the submission as a positive first step** and expressed relief that progress is now being made.
- Strongly requested that:
 - A **dedicated B3191 working group session** be progressed urgently;
 - Officers, coastal specialists, and local representatives be present together; and
 - Future development of the bid and any associated business case be **co-produced with the LCN framework**, not simply reported after decisions are made.
- Emphasised that the LCN should be used as a **continuing forum**, not a one-off engagement point.

4. Planned Maintenance Updates:

- **Traffic Management Schemes** – (Katherine Tyson)
 - Routine lining and signing work has resumed following winter delays.
 - Recent works included white lining at Willow Grove and on the A39, with some signage issues still outstanding.
 - Members raised concerns about sign condition, vegetation obscuring visibility, and unsuitable sat nav routing.
- **Winter Maintenance** (Kali Martin)
 - Kali Martin reported a significant winter defect backlog, with recovery work ongoing.
 - At the time of the meeting, there were **approximately 6,000 outstanding defects** recorded on the system.
 - Kali reported that the authority has now passed the point where **new defects are exceeding repairs**, meaning delivery is moving into a more positive “recovery” phase rather than deterioration.
 - A **recovery programme** is in place with the contractor (Kier), with the aim of returning to a more stable “**business as usual**” **position during early summer (June–July)**, subject to resourcing and weather.
 - Temporary repair methods are being used on some rural roads pending full resurfacing.
- **Highways Maintenance Schedule** (Kali Martin)

Kali gave a detailed update on the **A39 section between Williton and the power sub-station**, highlighting:

 - Ongoing **surface failure and potholing**;

- Recurrent **flooding linked to drainage system capacity** and runoff from adjacent land.
- He emphasised that **resurfacing cannot take place until drainage issues are resolved**, as reinstatement without drainage repairs would lead to premature failure.

A design process is underway focusing first on:

- Drainage improvements; followed by
- Subsequent carriageway resurfacing.

The scheme is complex due to:

- A nearby **development site** with associated drainage and junction requirements;
- The need to coordinate with developers, Streetworks, and utilities.

Kali confirmed that **night-time working** or other traffic-sensitive methods are being explored to minimise disruption, but exact delivery methods cannot yet be confirmed.

- **Public Utility Works** – (Ryan Chamberlain)
 - Ryan Chamberlain updated the group on utility works and upcoming engagement with residents in Watchet.
 - Members raised concerns about unclear road closure and diversion signage.
 - Officers advised that contractors work to national standards, though clearer communication is being encouraged.
 - Operation Wader was referenced as a possible route for improving diversion arrangements during major incidents.
- **Programmed Resurfacing Works** – (attached)
 - Surface dressing has started earlier than usual this year, with further phases expected later in the season.
 - Major resurfacing schemes are being planned for September and October, including works in Minehead and Washford.
 - Kali explained that, unusually this year, **underspends from the previous financial year were not allowed to carry over** into the current programme.
 - This has resulted in some resurfacing schemes **being removed or deferred** from the current year's programme in order to remain within budget.

A specific example was given:

- The **Avenue resurfacing** scheme remains programmed for September;
- However, associated or nearby works (including a section of **North Road**) have been **taken out of the programme** due to funding constraints.

Kali stressed that there is **very little tolerance for cost overruns** this year, increasing the need for tight scope control on all resurfacing schemes.

Kali confirmed that the **A39 through Washford village centre** remains a **significant programmed resurfacing scheme**.

- Indicative timing discussed was **September–October**, subject to design completion.
- This scheme is being planned alongside other Minehead-area works so plant and crews can be deployed efficiently.
- Kali confirmed that **design work is still ongoing**, and further details on phasing, traffic management, and working hours will be shared once designs are finalised.

Members requested clearer visibility of planned works on public mapping systems.

5. Executive report on Additional Funding for Highways Maintenance Activity.

- The executive report on additional highway maintenance funding was noted.
- Discussion covered priority-setting for works such as lining, signage, vegetation management and gully cleansing.
- Members sought reassurance on transparency, rural inclusion and opportunities for parish and town input.
- Flood protection assets and attenuation ponds were also raised in discussion.

6. Enhanced Parish Maintenance Process

- The enhanced parish maintenance process was outlined as an option for parishes to commission non-statutory highway works.
- Members noted that affordability remains a barrier for many rural parishes.
- The value of the LCN and local highways forums in raising parish concerns was reinforced.

7. Review Actions from previous meetings

- Previous actions were reviewed, including speeding, collision data, mapping of works and parish-specific issues.
- Updated road safety and collision data will be circulated when available.
- Members emphasised the importance of tracking parish issues clearly through the action log.

8. Parish Concerns / Updates

- Key parish concerns included diversion signage, sat nav routing, vegetation overgrowth and the balance between rural and urban maintenance priorities.
- Flooding, drainage and attenuation pond issues were also raised.

- Members asked for clearer communication with communities before and during works.

9. AOB / Dates for meetings going forward

B3191 follow-on meeting discussed:

- A dedicated B3191 follow-up meeting was proposed for 19 May 2026.
- Future highways topics for the LCN were noted, including coastal infrastructure, active travel and wider transport planning.
- Concern was raised about the short timescale for responding to the Somerset transport strategy consultation.

Wales & West Utilities drop-in session (for circulation):

Monday 18 May, 09:30–17:00, Watchet Community Centre (official WWU notice).

Link: [WWU drop-in event notice](#)

Proposed Minehead and Watchet LCN meeting Dates Dunster Meeting Room (TBC) West Somerset House	Highways Sub-Group Dates
Thursday 9 April 2026 at 6.30pm	Wednesday 13 May 10.15am – 1pm
Thursday 16 July 2026 at 6.30pm (AGM)	

10. Meeting closed at 1.30pm.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Surface Dressing and Resurfacing Map Updates:** Check with Chris Tucker to ensure current surface dressing and resurfacing works are accurately reflected on the public mapping system and resolve any missing data issues. (Kali)
- **Wales and West Utilities Open Day Communication:** Send the website link with correct details for the Wales and West Utilities open day to Sam and Brenda and ensure it is cascaded to all relevant parties. (Ryan)
- **Wessex Water Reinstatement Works Notification:** Distribute information about upcoming Wessex Water reinstatement works, including locations and dates, once available. (Ryan)
- **Operation Wader Diversion Signage Protocol:** Contact Avon and Somerset Police to discuss the possibility of reactivating Operation Wader and the use of pre-approved diversion route signage for major road closures. (Bev Norman (as referenced by Kali))
- **B3191 Project Stakeholder Meeting:** Send out a meeting invite for 19th May at 3:30pm to all interested parties, including those not present at the meeting, and ensure key stakeholders such as Councillor Davies, Williton, Dunster, and others are included. (Sam Murrell)
- **B3191 Project Coordination:** Coordinate with Mike O'Dowd-Jones and Matthew to confirm their attendance or representation at the 19th May meeting and communicate the agreed date to all participants. (Sam Murrell)

- **Coastal Adaptation and Road Project Integration:** Invite a representative from Neil Ogilvie's Coastal Adaptation Pilot group to the 19th May meeting to ensure coordination between the coastal protection and road realignment projects. (Sam Murrell)