



Local Community Network

Wells and Rural Main LCN Meeting Notes Tuesday 13th January 2026, 6.30pm, Wells Golf Club, Veal Lane, Wells, BA5 3DS and online.

Attendees:

Becky Collins – Adult Social Care, Somerset Council
Charlotte Griffin – Local Community Network Link Officer
Cllr Denise Denis (Chair) – Wells City Council
Cllr Edric Hobbs – Somerset Council
Cllr Theo Butt Phillip – Somerset Council
Dan Cox – Avon and Somerset Police
Darren Pearson – Avon and Somerset Police
David Madian – Cadeaux & Co
Elizabeth O’Sullivan – Resident
Emma Russell – Riot’Us
Graham Dawson
Jim Reeves – St Cuthbert (Out) Parish
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Kate Hellard - Locality Development Manager
Lilly Keeley-Watts – SALC
Liz Pedley – Resident
Martin Cooke - St Cuthbert (Out) Parish
Nick Cowling – Somerset Council
Phillip Blatchford – Emborough Parish Council
Philip Welch – Wells City Council
Sarah Powell – Wells City Council
Simon Lancey – Avon and Somerset Police
Simon Shimmin – North Wootton Parish Council
Theo van Henbergen – Accessible Wells
Tony Hathway – St Cuthbert (Out) Parish

Virtual attendees:

Denise Boulton – Wookey Parish Council and Godney Parish Council
Diane Abbott – Binegar PC
James Moore – Local Community Network Link Officer
John Bowskill – Wookey Parish Council
Jon Abbott – Binegar PC
Michelle Payne – Heads Up

Apologies:

Cllr Ros Wyke – Somerset Council
Cllr Heather Shearer – Somerset Council

AI has been used for these notes. Please check for accuracy.

1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)

The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming councillors, public attendees, and online participants. She outlined housekeeping: photography for publicity, fire exits, phone silencing, and the process for speaking (state name and organisation).

Clare was running late, so the working group updates were given before Clare's presentation.

2. Agreement of notes from previous meeting

Minutes were approved without objection and commended for being timely and well-produced.

Enforcement & Statutory Powers Speaker: To be reorganised for next full LCN meeting.

Highways Issues: Outstanding items to be addressed in the Highways Update later in the agenda.

Youth Provision Informal Meeting: Charlotte to update under AOB.

Councillor Attendance Review: Somerset Council consultation underway; link to be shared.

3. Working Group Updates

Highways Working Group

Presented by Kate (Somerset Council, Locality Development Manager).

Highways, Kate and Charlotte met recently to strengthen support for this LCN's Highways Working Group.

Plan to consolidate previously raised issues and group them thematically for better progress.

Proposal to hold themed meetings, including a dedicated session on road safety, which several parishes requested.

Highways will review outstanding items from previous meetings and provide updates.

Evening Meetings Request: Parish reps asked for evening Highways meetings. Highways cannot attend evenings; daytime meetings will continue (next meeting: 31 March, 2–4 PM, Portway Annexe).

Road Diversions: Concern about inappropriate or overlapping diversions. Highways agreed coordination must improve.

Need for Direct Contacts: Parishes requested named Highways contacts; Highways emphasised use of the “Report It” system, though acknowledged feedback concerns.

Desire for Localised Problem-Solving: Parishes felt some issues need site visits rather than generic reporting.

Active Travel Working Group

Presented online by Tony Hathway.

December meeting had 12 members, including councillors, Strawberry Line Society, Accessible Wells, and SALC representatives.

Focus was placed on accessible countryside routes for people with mobility challenges:

- Three proposed routes to allow wheelchair users to travel from Wells into surrounding countryside.
- Group walked parts of the Strawberry Line and identified feasible locations for wheelchair-friendly tables, benches, and play features.
- Strawberry Line volunteers willing to help with implementation.

Additional considerations:

- Need for rest points accessible to wheelchair users along the Strawberry Line.
- Some routes require landowner permission and surface improvement.

Planning Applications: Developers often fail to include links to existing paths and facilities. Parishes encouraged to demand connectivity between new developments and neighbouring sites.

Eco Week Event: Active Travel Day successful but mainly attracted already-engaged participants; group wants broader public engagement next year.

Upcoming Improvements in Wells:

- Priory Road crossing due for funding within the next two years.
- Tucker Street crossing next on the priority list.

Funding Constraints: S106/CIL funding limited due to health and education priority demands.

Parishes should feed active travel priorities to the cross-LCN Active Travel Group, which will produce a strategic list of priority schemes.

4. Police and Crime Commissioner

Claire Moody, PCC for Avon & Somerset Police. Presented alongside operational police and Somerset Council highways safety officers.

PCC Priorities Overview

Claire outlined five priorities:

1. Strengthen neighbourhood policing
2. Reduce violent crime (serious youth violence; violence against women & girls)
3. Prevention, including road safety
4. Victim support
5. Standards in policing, including robust vetting and officer support

Organisational Changes

Transition to a geographic policing model to better join up neighbourhood and response teams.

80 new officers added to neighbourhood tasking teams in June 2025 to focus on ASB and hotspots.

Public Q&A Highlights

Drug Driving & Enforcement

Police undertake ~250 drug/drink-drive arrests per month.

Drug driving rising due to misconceptions about how long substances remain in the body.

Dashcam/journey-cam submissions strongly encouraged; ~1,000 video files per month received.

Close Pass Campaign

Other forces use “close pass” operations; A&S prioritises risk-based deployment (motorcyclists & fatality-linked behaviours).

Dashcam reporting deemed more effective and scalable than on-street operations.

Speeding & 20mph Zones

Enforcement is data-driven; Community Speed Watch (CSW) data essential.

On-the-spot fines unlikely; focus remains on education.

A&S issued ~17,000 speeding detections in December alone, supported by unmarked vans, motorbikes, and developing AI-based enforcement.

Rural Crime

Significant recent improvement: successful prosecutions for farm machinery thefts; better coordination across force borders.

PCC hosts a rural crime forum; stronger links planned with PCSOs and local farms.

Raves / Unlicensed Music Events

Difficult to prevent due to encrypted communications.

Police attempt early intervention where intelligence is available.

Road Closures During Collisions

Long closures stem from need for forensic investigation, road cleansing, and recovery operations.

Somerset road network's lack of alternative routes worsens traffic impacts.

Visibility & Local Police Contact

Local neighbourhood officers encouraged residents to use email, town hall contact posters, and website postcode search to reach teams.

Please also see slide 6 on the presentation which is of useful links provided by Police Constable Dan Cox.

5. SALC Update (Community Health & Wellbeing Programme)

Presented by Lilly from SALC.

Key Points

- Programme awarded 60 grants totalling £565k+, reaching 169 parishes.
- Now focusing on small parishes (<1000 residents).
- Support available for:
 - Community engagement
 - Surveys & planning work
 - Small grants for local wellbeing projects
- SALC officers (Lilly & Fodo) available for parish meetings and project assistance until December.

6. AOB

Emergency Planning Session

Joint session with Avalon & Poldens LCN

Monday 9 March, Tor Rugby Football Club, 4 Lowerside Lane, Glastonbury, BA6 9GY, 6–9 PM

Parishes invited to attend and work on local emergency plans.

Youth Provision

Initial stakeholder discussion held; full written update to be included in meeting notes.

Charlotte has contacted Jessica Lewin, Connect Somerset Champion for the notes.

Community Working Review

157 residents consulted.

Data report completed; design workshops starting imminently.

Aim: improve Somerset Council's participatory approach, resilience, and LCN effectiveness.

7. Dates of the next meetings

Next full LCN meeting: 29 April 2026 6.30pm, Henton Village Hall.

Chair reminded parishes they must elect a new chair for the next cycle.

AGM: 9th July 2026 AGM , 6.30pm, Venue TBC

Active Travel Working Group: 10th March 2026, 7-9pm, The Portway Annexe, BA5 2QF

Highways Working Group: 31st March 2026, 2-4pm, The Portway Annexe, BA5 2QF

Emergency Planning Session: 9th March, Tor Rugby Football Club, 4 Lowerside Lane, Glastonbury, BA6 9GY, 6–9 PM