

Local Community Network

Cheddar and Axbridge LCN meeting notes 16th October 2025 Draycott Memorial Hall

Attendees:

Cllr Jackie Farley (Chair)
Cllr Ben Ferguson
Cllr Ros Wyke
Cllr Bob Filmer
Lilly Keeley-Watts (SALC)
Paul Fineran (Cheddar)
Delia McCarthy (Compton Bishop)
Will Human (Mark)
Cllr Robert Massey (Rodney Stoke & Draycott)
Adrian Jones (Weare)

Nataliya Wills (Link Officer)
Gill Keniston-Goble (Link Officer)

Virtual attendees:

Jessica Horner (Public Health Somerset Council)
Owen Bell (Public Health, Somerset Council)

Apologies:

Jim Hartcastle
Grahame Paine

1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)

The chair introduced the meeting, welcomed the room and online attendees and thanked Draycott Memorial Hall for hosting the LCN meeting. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. Election of Chair

No election was held.

3. Notes from Last Meeting

- A prior action to look into planning/highways interfaces was referenced as 'fulfilled', with ongoing coordination between Highways and colleagues to set expectations around appropriate topics for LCN (i.e. not individual planning applications).
- Mention that active travel work may be cross LCN, mainly for awareness.

4. Updates re: Working Groups

Highways Working Group

The update around the Highways Working Group focused on the effect that planning has on the Highways in the area.

The planning system was discussed, with a number of queries and requests being raised including

- Sessions that explain how the planning system works
- Updates on planning appeals and decisions
- How planning committees make their decisions

A new Somerset Local Plan is being created. Public consultation is expected later this year, and each Local Community Network (LCN) will have the opportunity to discuss it.

There was further discussion regarding concerns with current and future housing development, including:

- New housing sites taking a long time to build
- Developers saying projects are “not viable,” which often reduces the number of affordable homes
- Rising construction costs
- Developers buying land, getting permission, then selling the site on for profit
- Local communities living with disruption for many years while sites are slowly completed.

A permanent Chair is required to Chair all future Highways Working Group meetings.

Climate and Nature

The ‘Wilder Together’ event run by Somerset Wildlife Trust and aims to celebrate and share ideas for creating a wilder future together is taking place on 18th October from 11 am until 3.30 pm in the Red Brick Building, Glastonbury. There will be a small fee and food is included. Anyone that wishes to attend can book their tickets through Eventbrite.

A local group is working on a community arts project. They’ve received grant funding to run some taster sessions, and their long-term aim is to create a proper arts centre. They’re coordinating with other venues so events don’t clash. Because the activities are held in a Methodist chapel, no alcohol or dogs are allowed. They hope to eventually buy the space through crowdfunding and want this project to add to, not compete with, what local village halls and pubs already offer.

Access to Services

Current situation

- Village Agents assist local residents in finding services and support. Their organisation names have changed over time, but the role is the same.

- There are several different service directories, such as Health Connections Mendip and Connect Somerset, however, only a minority within the public are aware that they exist.
- While a new official Council directory is being built (starting with services for young people), the Link officer will create a simple PDF of useful links and put it on the LCN webpage, so people have one place to look in the meantime.

Joy App

- A GP practice told the group about the Joy App, which lists services. Community events can be added for free, however, using it as a full directory costs around £18,000 per Primary Care Network, which is too expensive for the LCN. It was decided that the LCN would not use the Joy App due to the cost.

Engagement and networking

- There is a Connect Somerset breakfast meeting on 17 November. Invitations have been sent to parish clerks, and Nataliya will resend the details.

Information we still need (parishes to help)

- Details of antenatal classes (where and when they run, and whether people know about them).
- Information about youth services in each area, including any gaps.
- Information on support for people with dementia and for unpaid carers (important as there are higher numbers in the Cheddar–Axbridge–Draycott area).
- Food access and transport issues, especially for households without a car (about 8%). People without transport may struggle to reach food banks or shops and may rely on supermarket deliveries..

5. Data Behind Challenges and Opportunities in Cheddar and Axbridge LCN – Presentation from Public Health.

The LCN meeting attendees were given a presentation by Nataliya with support from Jessica Horner and Owen Bell, Public Health, Somerset Council. The presentation will be shared with the minutes of the meeting.

Feedback that was taken from the presentation:

- Places with lots of care homes (like Burnham or Weston) can make it look as if dementia rates are higher than they really are for local residents. The data needs to be understood in context.
- Some data was collected during COVID, so things like working from home and commuting patterns may not reflect normal behaviour.
- Rural life doesn't always fit standard data measures — for example, some people use tractors instead of cars. Local knowledge is important to understand what the numbers really mean.

Key Points for LCN Priorities:

1. There needs to be good access to services and the public need one clear and easy-to-find directory for local services. We also need to raise awareness among GP practices and the wider community.
2. Ageing well & supporting carers:
Higher levels of dementia and an older population mean we should focus on support for older people, unpaid carers, screening programmes (like breast screening), and preventing falls.
3. Healthy weight & diabetes:
We should encourage activities that help with physical health, such as walking, cycling, nature activities, and local community/arts projects.
4. Housing & infrastructure:
The LCN should feed into the new Local Plan, especially around:
 - Affordable housing
 - How quickly developers build
 - Developer “viability” claims
 - Local employment opportunities
 - Transport links and access

6. Actions (see table below)

7. Date and Venues of Future Meetings

- December’s LCN meeting will be replaced with a standalone Local Planning session.
- January LCN (date and venue to be confirmed).

Actions for Cheddar & Axbridge main LCN meeting

Date	Action no	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
16/10/25	1	A date to be scheduled for a standalone Highways Working Group meeting.	Link officer	Completed – meeting on 24 th Nov 2025
	2	Share Public Health presentation with Link Officer to attach to the minutes of the meeting.	Link officer	
	3	Create a PDF web page listing key directories/links (Health Connections Mendip, Connect Somerset etc).	Link officer	

4	Send Link Officer any information on local services information (eg antenatal classes, youth provision, dementia support, transport) to be included in the PDF web page listing.	LCN members	
5	Share invite to the Young People Networking neighbourhood breakfast taking place on 17 th November with Parish Clerks and Unitary Councillors.	Link officer	
6	Share the Eventbrite link to the Wilder Together Event organised by the Somerset Wildlife Trust.	Link officer	
7	Promote the need for a standalone chair for the Highways Working Group.	LCN members and Link officer	
8	Confirm the name of the current PCSO Officer and to invite them to future LCN meetings to give an update on crime data and a crime report.	Link officer	
9	Organise a standalone Local Planning Session in November, venue to be confirmed and further information to be shared	Link officer	Draycott Memorial Hall booked for 12 th February from 6.30pm till 8.30pm.