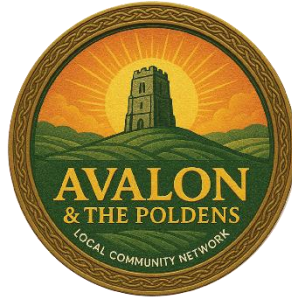


Local Community Network



Avalon and Poldens LCN Meeting Notes
7th October 2025 – 7-9pm
West Pennard Village Hall, Newtown Lane, West Pennard,
Glastonbury, BA6 8RT and via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Stephen Page (Co-Vice Chair)
Cllr Chris Bennetts (Meare & Westhay PC, Co-Vice Chair)
Cllr Liz Leyshon
Cllr Simon Carswell
Cllr Bryan Knickerbocker (Street PC)
Gus Wans (Ashcott PC)
Jenny Lawrence (Ashcott PC)
Rosie Lander (Meare & Westhay PC)
Liz Horne (Meare & Westhay PC)
Rita Wren (Meare & Westhay PC)
Graham Croucher (Shapwick PC)
Simon Jackson (Barton St. David PC)
John Dodson (Street Neighbourhood Watch Association)
Becky Collins (Adult Social Care, Somerset Council)
Paul Elliston (Somerset Rivers Authority)
Charlotte Griffin (LCN Link Officer, Somerset Council)
James Moore (LCN Link Officer, Somerset Council)
Nataliya Wills (LCN Link Officer, Somerset Council)

Virtual attendees:

Georgia Terry (Cossington PC)
Cllr Ros Wyke
Julie Welch
Jessica Lewin (Connect Somerset Champion and YMCA)

Apologies:



Natalie Watson (Avalon Marshes)

1. Welcome

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chairs

Nataliya led a discussion on the inability to formally elect a chair and vice chair due to insufficient quorum (25% needed), clarifying the requirements for voting and proposing that current acting incumbents continue in their roles until the next opportunity for formal elections, with agreement from those present.

Nataliya clarified that only nominated representatives from each parish are eligible to vote, even if multiple people from a parish are present, and distinguished between unitary councillors, partner organisations, and parish representatives for voting purposes.

Chris and Stephen will continue to Co-Vice Chair.

3. Working group updates:

Health and Wellbeing Working Group

- Step Ride Thrive

Apologies were received by Natalie from the Avalon Marshes. Charlotte relayed Natalie's written update on the Step by Project, highlighting the launch and usage statistics of the 668 bus service, the number of community and school bike maintenance sessions delivered and planned, and ongoing efforts to establish local cycle hire schemes, with considerations around maintenance, staffing, and insurance.

Promotional materials are currently being created for the bus/project.

Charlotte described the partnership with SASP (Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership) to set up health walks on the Avalon Marshes, the recruitment of volunteer leaders, and plans for a Discovering Nature week in Easter 2026.

Natalie requested support from the group for boosting marketing and press coverage, introductions to school heads and parish clerks, collaboration with support groups, and advice on data collection and evaluation for project users.

Action: Parishes to promote the school and community bike offers. Expressions of interest can be emailed to avalonandpoldenslcn@somerset.gov.uk

- Directory

Nataliya reported on the mapping of support organisations and the exploration of options for hosting a centralised directory, including discussions with Connect



Somerset and the West Mendip Primary Care Network, and the need for regular updates, digital and print accessibility, and coordination with local surgeries and community organisations.

Nataliya and Charlotte also met with Joy App but there were cost implications.

The group discussed the importance of managing and updating the directory, the potential for links on parish websites, and the plan to share the database via meeting notes and agendas, with updates to be provided at future meetings.

Highways Working Group

Graham reported disappointment at the lack of progress on the proposed enhanced highways scheme, noting that no updates had been received and that this delay affects planning for future meetings and activities.

Action: Charlotte to chase up regarding the Enhanced Highways Scheme.

Graham explained rollout of Highways Volunteer Training and the testing of mapping options, with positive feedback on the training programme and the value of new mapping tools for planning and coordination.

It was clarified that the current Highways Officer, Liam Gill, is only responsible for half of the parishes, leading to uneven engagement; Charlotte and others identified the need to determine who covers the remaining parishes and to integrate them into future meeting programmes.

Action: Identify other Highways Officers for the other Parishes within the LCN.

The Highways Working Group has experimented with joint meetings with Burnham LCN, but this is currently being reviewed and a meeting with the Burnham/Avalon and Poldens Highways Working Group Chairs and the two Link Officers is scheduled for later this month to discuss this.

The group set objectives for the coming year, including identifying external speakers to add value, particularly regarding issues like HGV traffic through villages during emergencies, and emphasised the need for solutions that benefit all communities.

4. Connect Somerset presentation

Apologies were made from Jessica, Connect Somerset Champion. Jessica has offered to present in the January meeting, so her presentation will be rescheduled for then.

Action: Reschedule the Connect Somerset presentation for the January LCN main meeting.



5. Adult Social Care

Becky Collins introduced herself and outlined the structure of adult social care in Somerset, providing contact details for herself and other service managers.

Becky described the main services available, including Somerset Council customer services, mental health social work teams, safeguarding, transitions for adults with learning disabilities, hospital interface teams, intermediate care pathways, and the Somerset Independent Living Centre. Becky also stressed the importance of supporting unpaid carers, urging attendees to refer families in need.

Becky highlighted the need for better communication about available services, suggesting more outreach through parish meetings, local media, and leafleting, and encouraged attendees to share information with their communities.

Becky advised that care homes are not always the best option and encouraged early conversations with social care to explore alternatives, explaining the financial thresholds for self-funding and the assessment process under the Care Act.

Action: Parishes to share the information provided by Becky. The presentation will be sent out with the meeting notes and uploaded onto the website.

6. Emergency planning presentation and discussion

Paul Elliston, Community Engagement Officer from Somerset Rivers Authority reported on the preparedness survey sent to parish councils, noting that strong winds, power outages, access issues, cold, snow, ice, and flooding are the most prevalent risks identified by communities.

Paul explained the necessity of community emergency plans, citing the increasing frequency of high-intensity rainfall events, limited resources of emergency responders, and the benefits of coordinated local action to minimise impacts and speed recovery.

Paul offered free workshops to help parishes develop emergency plans, using a template and a participatory approach to identify risks, resources, key contacts, and deployment strategies, with the option for follow-up exercises to test plans.

Action: To organise with the Parishes for Paul/Bel to facilitate a free Emergency Planning workshop.

Paul highlighted the availability of up to £5,000 in funding through the Somerset Prepared Partnership for training, equipment, and other needs identified in emergency plans, and described the involvement of other organisations in supporting vulnerable households.

Paul's presentation can be found in the meeting presentation.

7. Date and time of 2025 meetings

- Round 2 - January 7th, Baltonsborough Village Hall, 7-9pm and online.

8. AOB

[Consultation on proposed changes to Sunday parking charges - Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)

Closes 20th October 2025

Residents and businesses are invited to share their views on proposals to introduce Sunday parking charges across council-run car parks as part of a wider plan to make parking rules fairer and more consistent across the county.

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025/26 - Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)

Closes 31st October 2025

Your views are sought on the draft Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

[City, Town & Parish Preparedness Survey](#) - first time such a survey has been undertaken!

Closes 31st December 2025

Somerset Council in association with Somerset Prepared are inviting all City, Town and Parish Councils or Parish Meetings to support our collective preparedness for emergencies. The survey aims to:

- Support Somerset Council in fulfilling its statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) by assessing emergency risks across the county.
- Inform the development of targeted support and activities that strengthen community resilience where it is most needed.
- Establish a baseline of information to help track progress over time and ensure we are collectively moving towards greater resilience.
- Provide an opportunity for councils to request support in any of the areas covered by the survey.

Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day – Wednesday 15th October 2025 9.15am-4pm

Action Log

Date	Action	Completed by
07/10/2025	Parishes to promote the school and community bike offers. Expressions of interest can be emailed to avalonandpoldenslcn@somerset.gov.uk	All Parishes
	Charlotte to chase up regarding the Enhanced Highways Scheme.	Charlotte
	Identify other Highways Officers for the other Parishes within the LCN.	Charlotte
	Reschedule the Connect Somerset presentation for the January LCN main meeting.	Charlotte
	Parishes to share the information provided by Becky. The presentation will be sent out with the meeting notes and uploaded onto the website.	All Parishes
	To organise with the Parishes for Paul/Bel to facilitate a free Emergency Planning workshop.	Charlotte/Co Vice-Chairs