



Local Community Network

Shepton Mallett LCN meeting notes – 29th September 2025, Online, 7 – 9 pm

Attendees:

Chair: Cllr Martin Lovell

Cllr Barry Clarke

Tony Hargraves, Croscombe Parish Council

Mark Davies, Holcombe Parish Council

Nick Hall, Pilton Parish Council

Simon Collins, Stoke St Michael Parish Council

Jane Nicklin, Shepton Mallett Parish Council

Robin Horton, Resident

Anna Mearns

Emma Fynn

Cara MacMahon

Lily Keely-Watts, SALC Community Health and Wellbeing Programme

Susan Ehmann, Somerset Bus Partnership

Tony Zangoura, Glastonbury Train Link Group

Charlotte Griffin – Link Officer, Somerset Council

Laura Smedley – Partnerships Officer, Somerset Council

1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)

The Chair, Somerset Councillor, Cllr Martin Lovell introduced the meeting, welcomed all attendees and thanked Somerset Council for hosting the LCN meeting. The meeting was held online and was recorded and transcribed.

2. Review priorities for the year – Action Plan

Nataliya led the review of the Local Community Network (LCN) action plan, confirming four main priorities including highways safety, community transport, youth engagement, and parish collaboration, with input from Barry, Nick, Tony, and others, and outlined steps for progressing these initiatives in the coming months.

- **Highways Safety Partnership:** Nataliya described partnership work on the A371, including a safety road discussion forum supported by Ansford Parish Council, speed restrictions, enhanced signage, and targeted safety measures,

with contributions from local businesses and police representatives such as Dan Cox. The approach involved collaboration with local residents and businesses to address road safety concerns and implement technological solutions.

- **Community Transport Scheme:** Nataliya explained the development of a community transport scheme in Shepton, focusing on supporting young people and less mobile residents. Susan, involved in the bus partnership, provided expertise on local routes and pitfalls. The scheme aims to address gaps in transport provision and is supported by partner organisations, with a meeting scheduled for 14th October to review heat maps and needs assessments.
- **Youth Engagement and Social Opportunities:** The group discussed the need for increased youth engagement and social opportunities, identifying areas for adult support as well. Nataliya emphasised the importance of parish engagement, noting the involvement of 21 parishes in the LCN area and the need to share experiences and plans, such as community surveys and emergency planning.
- **Quarterly Meetings and Officer Support:** Nataliya announced that, starting from October, they would have increased capacity to support the LCN, with new officers and a buddy system in place. Quarterly LCN and highways working group meetings are scheduled, with agendas to be set three weeks in advance based on member input. The next major meeting is a forum on safer roads for HGVs on 28th October.

3. Community Cars Scheme

Nataliya presented the community car scheme, detailing its digital booking system, initial funding, and plans for expansion beyond Shepton, with Barry and others raising questions about inclusivity and operational parameters.

- **Scheme Structure and Funding:** The scheme will use a digital map for journey bookings, with a coordinator managing requests and volunteer drivers able to select journeys flexibly. Initial capital of £5,000 is available, and the scheme aims to form a Community Interest Company to access further funding, drawing on advice from Spark and Nick Madison from the Council's transport services.
- **Inclusivity and Parish Involvement:** Barry asked whether the scheme would be limited to Shepton Mallet; Nataliya clarified that the system could operate across multiple parishes, provided there is local support for promotion and volunteer recruitment. The scheme is designed to be flexible and responsive to areas of greatest need, with plans to expand as demand and resources allow.

- **Support and Volunteer Training:** Nataliya outlined plans for supporting volunteer drivers, including training on insurance, dementia awareness, and mental health. Partner organisations will assist with documentation and sustainability, and the scheme will benefit from lessons learned in Frome, where a similar initiative proved financially viable.

4. Safer Road for HGVs

Anna introduced the safer roads for HGVs project, focusing on the Beacon Hill Crossroads and surrounding villages, with detailed discussion on infrastructure challenges, stakeholder engagement, and upcoming forums involving local businesses, quarries, and Somerset Council highways specialists.

- **Infrastructure and Traffic Issues:** Anna described the impact of HGV traffic on villages such as Stokes at Michael, Coleford, and Holcomb, highlighting the closure and planned repair of a bridge culvert and the resulting changes in traffic patterns. The repair method involves inserting a sleeve under the culvert, addressing complex service lines and statutory requirements.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** The initiative seeks to bring together parish councils, local businesses (including quarries and hauliers), and Somerset Council highways officers to identify and address dangerous junctions and routes, particularly the old Frome Road and Beacon Hill Crossroads. Anna emphasised the need for transitional arrangements and strategic planning to balance community safety and business efficiency.
- **Upcoming Forum and Strategic Planning:** A forum is scheduled for 28th October in Shepton, where quarries, hauliers, and highways specialists will collaborate on mapping and planning safer routes for HGVs. Anna and Nataliya are coordinating invitations and agenda, aiming for a pilot project at Beacon Hill Crossroads and broader partnership work across the region.
- **Traffic Survey and Data Collection:** Anna proposed conducting extensive traffic surveys to understand HGV movement patterns, cut-throughs, and infrastructure stress points. The Council's expertise in running such surveys is seen as valuable for informing future interventions and ensuring targeted improvements.

5. Connect Somerset Neighbourhood Meetings

Nataliya outlined the role of Connect Somerset neighbourhood meetings in fostering collaboration among health, social care, and community organisations, with Nick and others discussing strategies for youth engagement and the integration of community transport and local initiatives.

- **Meeting Structure and Purpose:** Connect Somerset meetings are organised quarterly by champions recruited from local charities and organisations, focusing on health and well-being, particularly for young people. These meetings provide networking opportunities and facilitate collaboration on community projects, such as support groups and transport solutions.
- **Integration with Community Transport:** Nataliya highlighted the importance of aligning community transport initiatives with the needs identified by partner organisations, such as facilitating access to support groups and health services. The meetings serve as a platform to identify demand and coordinate resources.
- **Youth Engagement Strategies:** Nick raised the need to focus on youth engagement, referencing approaches like 'Make the Sunshine' and the potential for bringing services directly to village halls rather than requiring travel. The group discussed the value of sharing information and collaborating on initiatives, such as repair shops and health education events.

6. Any Other Business

- **Shepton Mallet Housing Development and Community Impact:** Nick, Jane, Barry, and Robin discussed the planned development of 620 houses (with a possible additional 150) in Shepton Mallet, examining implications for schooling, health services, housing density, and public transport, with input from Pilton Parish Council and neighbourhood planning teams.
 - a. **Development Plans and Density:** Barry and Robin provided details on the housing density of the new estate, comparing it to older developments and expressing concerns about urban impact. The neighbourhood plan allocates land for expansion, with considerations for self-build, green space, and social housing.
 - b. **Public Transport Considerations:** Susan raised concerns about limited bus service to the new development area, noting that the #1 route offers minimal coverage. Jane and Robin confirmed that proposals include a new bus stop, but broader transport solutions are needed, such as a proper transport hub and improved green travel routes.
 - c. **Community Services and S106 Commitments:** Jane, as chair of planning in Shepton Town Council, discussed ongoing negotiations regarding S106 monies, school provision, and the integration of the new estate into the town. The group agreed to maintain communication between parishes and bring the issue to future LCN meetings as needed.
- **Shepton Mallet Community Hospital Status:** Jane updated the group on the parlous state of Shepton Mallet Community Hospital, ongoing negotiations to

retain and integrate services, and the potential need for LCN support in future advocacy efforts.

- **Service Retention and Integration:** Jane explained that parts of the hospital may need to close due to safety concerns, with efforts underway to create a multi-service hub including mental health, NHS, and social work. Negotiations are ongoing, and community transport remains a key issue for access.
- **LCN Funding and Staffing Update:** Barry queried the current funding for LCNs, with Nataliya explaining budget allocations, staffing challenges, and recent recruitment efforts, clarifying that funding is primarily used for staff and venues, and that operational efficiency is under review.
 - d. **Budget Allocation and Staffing:** Nataliya stated that the LCN budget covers staff and venue costs, with recent challenges in recruiting and retaining admin support. The team is nearing full capacity, with eight officers confirmed and a ninth starting soon, but admin support remains limited.
- **Police and Community Safety Team Involvement:** Nataliya, Barry, Nick, and Anna discussed the relevance of police and community safety team participation in LCN meetings, considering the value of targeted engagement on issues such as drugs, antisocial behaviour, and county lines, with plans to invite relevant managers for future updates.
 - e. **Community Safety Team Structure:** Nataliya described recent changes in the community safety team, including new managers focused on domestic abuse, antisocial behaviour, and one teams. The team is working to ensure coverage across Somerset and may present at future meetings to clarify roles and points of contact for specific issues.

7. Date and Venues of future meetings / Actions

LCN Meeting, 26th January 2026 (Online)

Date	Action	Completed by
	Community Car Scheme:	
29/09/25	Identify and encourage a representative from Coleford parish to participate in the Community Car Scheme development meeting on 14th October.	NW
29/09/25	Collect and map data on areas of particular need for community transport, including feedback from parishes and support groups, to inform the launch location of the scheme.	NW
	Safer Roads for HGVs:	
29/09/25	Collate and distribute the full list of confirmed attendees for the Safer Roads for HGVs Forum on 28th October, including key stakeholders from highways, quarries, and haulage companies.	NW
29/09/25	Introduce Andy Rimmel from Frampton's to Nataliya and Anna regarding participation in the Safer Roads for HGVs Forum.	JN
29/09/25	Obtain and share an update from Sarah Davis on the feedback and progress regarding Beacon Hill Crossroads and related issues before the upcoming forum.	NW
29/09/25	Any Other Business:	
29/09/25	Neighbourhood Meetings Information Sharing: Share details of Pilton's repair shop collaboration with Shepton Mallet in the next newsletter to promote inter-parish cooperation.	NW
29/09/25	Organise a meeting specifically to discuss the future of Shepton Mallet Community Hospital and potential support from the LCN when negotiations become public.	NW/JN