

Local Community Network

Wells and Rural LCN Meeting Notes
29th September 2025 - 7-9pm
Godney Village Hall, Lower Godney, BA5 1RZ
and via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

- Cllr Denise Denis (Chair)
- Cllr Tessa Munt
- Cllr Heather Shearer
- Cllr Theo Butt Philip
- Cllr Jack Murdoch-North (Godney PC)
- Cllr Richard Evans (Godney PC)
- Denise Boulton (Godney PC and Wookey PC)
- Kathy Bissett (North Wootton PC)
- Simon Shimmin (North Wootton PC)
- Philip Welch (Wells City Council)
- Sarah Powell (Wells City Council)
- Martin Stanley
- Charlotte Griffin (Somerset Council, Link Officer)
- Nataliya Wills (Somerset Council, Link Officer)

Virtual attendees:

- Jessica Lewin (Connect Somerset Champion/YMCA)
- Ian Bowen (AONB Liaison Officer, Somerset Council)
- Michelle Payne (Heads Up)
- Lisa Pool (St Cuthbert (Out) PC)
- (St Cuthbert (Out) PC)

Apologies:

- Philip Blatchford (Emborough PC)
- Nick Ryder (Somerset Council)

1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)

2. Networking/Discussion: The purpose and scope of the Wells and Rural LCN

These agenda items linked together on the day. Attendees of the meeting split into groups to discuss positives and opportunities that lie within the LCN and it was an opportunity for networking.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Communications between meetings

- There is a long time between meetings with little communication on progress of actions
- Different parishes have different priorities. For example, Wells is very different to Godney.
- Lack of consistency with a Link Officer. Charlotte will be the third Link Officer for the Wells and Rural LCN.

3. Speaker: Knowledge of enforcement and powers of action by the statutory organisations

Apologies were received from the planned speaker.

Action: Re-organise speaker for 'Knowledge of enforcement and powers of action by the statutory organisations.'

We have the Police and Crime Commissioner, Clare Moody, confirmed to attend the next LCN main meeting on the **13th of January 2026**. (*Please note that the date has been changed after the meeting. It was discussed in this LCN meeting that the next one would be on 29th of January. It will now be on the **13th of January 2026**.)

4. Presentation: Working groups and LCN contacts

The group discussed the current structure, scheduling challenges, and future plans for the LCN working groups, including highways, active travel, and proposed youth and environment groups, with attention to officer availability and meeting times.

There are two current Working Groups which are Active Travel and Highways. The Highways Working group recently requested a road safety themed meeting. The LCN discussed persistent issues with highways, including officer availability, road safety, maintenance, and communication about road works, with specific examples of local problems and suggestions for improvement.

In regard to Highways Officers not attending evening appointment, why is this and could they attend meetings that are 4-6pm?

Action: Clarify why Highways Officers cannot attend evening meetings. Explore the possibility of scheduling highways working group meetings between 4pm and 6pm to accommodate both officers and councillors.

The LCN described specific issues such as blocked drains, poor repair work, and flooding affecting roads and villages. Nataliya encouraged reporting these issues via the official channels and offered to forward them to relevant officers. Nataliya clarified that the reporting function is now the primary method for raising issues, requiring a case reference for follow-up. Generic team emails are used for tracking and continuity, with personal emails discouraged to avoid loss of information if staff change.

Action: LCN participants to email specific highways issues in advance so they can be forwarded to relevant officers for follow-up, especially if officers cannot attend evening meetings.

Participants discussed the need for clearer signage at road works, including permit numbers and distance indicators. Efforts have been made to enforce these requirements with contractors and utilities companies, and public information is shared via council websites and social media. Tessa has raised this but will keep pushing doing so.

Active Travel – Teams Channel created but not sure if this is the best way.

5. Successes and future possibilities

Youth Provision

The topic of 'Youth' was again brought up. Denise Denis highlighted previous successes in securing seed funding for youth initiatives, with Wells and St Cuthbert's Out benefiting from collaborative applications. The funding supported events focused on youth and active travel, demonstrating the value of joint efforts.

Jessica described ongoing work with YMCA colleagues to identify local needs, existing services, and barriers such as transport. She offered to provide suggestions for additional funding sources and recommended using a website to map available services.

The LCN discussed the importance of involving multiple parishes in youth provision, noting that interdependence exists for activities and services. The group agreed to scope interest at a larger meeting before formalising a working group.

Jessica is keen to take part in the development of this but cannot commit to chairing the meetings. Jessica is happy to facilitate initial discussions around this and offered a visit to Street Youth Club.

Action: Arrange an initial informal meeting to discuss youth provision needs, existing services, and barriers in parishes.

Environment and Flooding

The LCN considered the formation of an environment or flooding group, discussed the value of annual preparedness sessions, and suggested cross-LCN collaboration for issues that affect multiple areas.

Somerset Prepared event on 15 October, focused on environment and preparedness, was mentioned, noting its usefulness for general information sharing. The LCN agreed that specific flooding issues vary by area and may be better addressed through targeted sessions with relevant agencies.

It was suggested that flooding and environment topics could be handled as cross-LCN initiatives rather than forming permanent groups, allowing for broader collaboration and more effective problem-solving.

6. Any Other Business

Venue and Budget Constraints: The LCN Link Officer explained that the LCN has a limited budget for venues, mostly spent on main meetings. Suggestions were made for parishes to offer free venues on a rotating basis. Venues need to have a good WiFi connection and be accessible in all weathers. There were connectivity issues at this meeting.

Communication and Information Sharing: Members addressed the importance of efficient communication, sharing of meeting notes, and contact information among parishes, with consideration for GDPR compliance and feedback mechanisms for councillors who do not attend meetings. Nataliya explained that contact details for clerks and council representatives can be shared if they use official addresses, but personal emails require explicit consent due to GDPR. A record of consent will be maintained, and the contact list will be updated as new permissions are granted.

Action: Collect feedback from councillors who do not attend meetings to understand barriers to participation and identify what topics would encourage their engagement.

Distribution of Notes: LCN Link Officers proposed that notes from working groups be distributed to the entire LCN, not just group members, to keep all stakeholders informed and allow meetings to focus on substantive content and speakers.

Action: Notes from LCN meetings to be sent out to LCN within 21 days.

Eco Week Promotion: Denise Denis distributed some Eco Week promotional materials to clerks and representatives for display on local notice boards and encourage participation. Eco Week is running from the 11th-20th of October.

Next Meeting: The next main LCN meeting will be on the **13th of January 2026**.

Date	Action	Completed by
30/9/2025	Re-organise speaker for 'Knowledge of enforcement and powers of action by the statutory organisations'	
	Clarify why Highways Officers cannot attend evening meetings. Explore the possibility of scheduling highways working group meetings between 4pm and 6pm to accommodate both officers and councillors.	
	LCN participants to email specific highways issues in advance so they can be forwarded to relevant officers for follow-up, especially if officers cannot attend evening meetings.	
	Arrange an initial informal meeting to discuss youth provision needs, existing services, and barriers in parishes.	

	Collect feedback from councillors who do not attend meetings to understand barriers to participation and identify what topics would encourage their engagement.	
	Notes from LCN meetings to be sent out to LCN within 21 days.	