

Local Community Network

Hestercombe LCN meeting notes Thursday 11th December 2025 West Monkton Village Hall

Attendees:

Philip Spencer, Chair / North Petherton TC
Cllr Norman Cavill, Vice chair
Paul Townsend, Kingston St Mary
Lucinda Spelman-Ives, North Petherton TC
Linda Hyde, North Petherton TC
Tina Talbot, Village Agent, Thrive
Cllr Alan Bradford
Doug Wilson, Broomfield PC
Stewart Haskins, West Monkton PC
Andy Pritchard, Mind in Somerset & Connect Somerset

Anne Shilton, SC LCN Link Officer for Hestercombe
Michelle Brooks SC LCN Link Officer
Laura Smedley, SC Project Officer
Callam Davey, SC Tech support

Virtual attendees:

Kate Welsh, West Monkton PC

1. **Welcome, introductions and apologies.**
Apologies received from Cllr Lee Baker.
2. **Agree notes of the last meeting.**
Notes agreed by all.
3. **Address any actions from the last meeting.**
Outstanding actions included traffic survey/planning, youth activities, and ongoing invitations to external partners like the Canal & Rivers Trust.
4. **Updates from working groups.**
Highways & Transport. Detailed discussion on the impact of new housing developments on local traffic, with projections showing a potential 39% increase in traffic through North Petherton. Suggested contacting Bridgwater Town Council and LCN to share information.

Concerns raised about the cumulative effect of multiple developments including Walford Park and Langaller Park and the need for Somerset Council to challenge and provide solutions.

Suggestions included lobbying for a new motorway junction at Walford Cross and considering investment in active travel infrastructure instead of costly roadworks. A new junction is unlikely due to the huge cost.

Update on ongoing roadworks and minor repairs around Taunton and Castle Green. New transport hub at previous bus station site will start in early 2026 to be completed by the summer and will include real time travel updates, covered waiting areas and better facilities.

Request for John Fellingham, Highways to talk to LCN.

HYPE – children and young people.

Updates on youth club activities, including increased participation and ongoing funding applications to the Norman Family Trust, Awards for All and HPC.

The Boombox youth provision is set to continue if funding is secured. Efforts to engage young people through research by Somerset Youth Theatre in primary schools and adapt youth club offerings to different age groups. Discussion on the catchment area for HPC funding and the need for broader inclusion of the Hestercombe area. Grateful for support throughout LCN area. Appears that HPC want to include Hestercombe LCN in their engagement for workforce uplift but are reluctant to agree any impact when it comes to funding projects within the area.

5. Hestercombe House & Gardens

The site is operational with a skeleton staff while awaiting the administrator's exit report, due in early 2026. After this, the future of the estate should have more direction. Link Officer met with Operations Manager who has strong interest in maintaining community links and volunteer engagement, but future plans are on hold pending administration decisions. They are keen to work more closely with local residents and groups. Increased local publicity about the current and future plans would be appreciated however this is the responsibility of Hestercombe House and Gardens and the administrators, Mazars and not something that would come into the remit of Somerset Council, unless requested.

6. Hinkley Point C Workforce Uplift feedback.

Notes from the HPC workforce uplift meeting covered impacts on health, transport, housing and local industry. Whilst HPC staff are able to use health services at work, their families rely on local GP etc, thereby increasing some pressure.

Concerns about increased traffic, air pollution and housing pressures (including rising rents and evictions), particularly around M5 J24. Concerns about HMO's – over 6 individual people, building has to be registered as HMO but can take 5 workers (without registration), all with

cars creating parking issues, noise and air pollution. HMOs and rental properties also have wider impact on housing market, which is usually negative for local residents.

HPC workforce numbers are expected to peak at 15,000 over the next three years affecting local services and infrastructures. HPC noted concerns and issues raised by residents.

Ongoing consultation between Somerset Council and EDF regarding future funding and mitigation measures.

7. Any other business

Boundary Review – discussion on the community governance review and its implications for parish boundaries and representation.

Concerns about the potential division of North Petherton to Bridgwater and the impact on community identity and council finances,

All agree to monitor proposals and make representations as needed.

Bus services & Slinky – review of local bus networks and the impact on community identify and council finances. Having expanded and Attendees agree to monitor proposals. Suggestion of daytime online meeting with manager for Slinky service, if there is sufficient interest. Please notify Link Officer. Slinky buses able to access newer housing developments rather than larger service buses, particularly if roads busy with parked cars.

Suggestions for future agenda items included mapping bus networks and promoting alternative transport.

8. Dates of future meetings

- 4TH March 2026, venue to be confirmed. Talk and Q&A with Clare Moody, Police & Crime Commissioner. Questions are welcomed in advance if possible but will be answered during the evening – not relating to individual cases.
- 10th June 2026, AGM, likely to be Kingston St Mary Village Hall 7.00 pm.

Date	Action	Completed by
11/12/25	Collate and provide feedback by mid January 2026 on active travel toolkit. (Previously available within Active Travel cross LCN group with feedback deadline of 22/12/25.)	All / link officer
	Gather evidence on bus services.	All. <i>Link officer requested info on current bus routes – awaiting reply. Rec/d 20/02/26.</i>
	Monitor boundary rewording and feedback by 14/01/26	all
	Share travel research and figures with Bridgwater Town Council and LCN.	<i>Forwarded to Mayor of Bridgwater TC.</i>
	Invite John Fellingham, Highways, to talk to North Petherton PC and/or LCN.	Link officer. <i>J Fellingham likely to attend June 2026 mtg.</i> <i>J Fellingham in contact with N Petherton TC regarding attending their mtg.</i>
	Slinky – online, day time meeting option with manager if sufficient interest from LCN, for update and feed into Active Travel. Link officer will collate interest and set date if meeting wanted.	Link officer. <i>20 March 2026, 10.00 – 12.00 online.</i>