



Vale of Frome Local Community Network

October LCN Meeting

Thursday 23rd October 2025 between 19:00 – 21:00
Rode Memorial Hall

Attendees

Attendee	Representing
Max Wide	Chair of LCN
Councillor Adam Boyden	Vice Chair of the LCN and Frome North
Councillor Dawn Denton	Frome North
Councillor Michael Dunk	(Remote) Frome West
Peter Travis	Rode PC
Kevin Bishop	Beckington PC
Michael Gay	Wanstrow PC
Steve Tanner	Frome TC
Owen King	Frome TC
Mel Lock	Director of Adult Social Care – Somerset Council
Emma Lacey-Williams	Connect Somerset Champion
Charlotte Griffin	Somerset Council
James Moore	Somerset Council

Apologies

Attendee	Representing
Mike Salmon	Rode PC
Sheila Salmon	Trudoxhill PC
Councillor Helen Kay	Frome East
Councillor Martin Dimery	Frome West
John Reckless and Sarah Barnett	Buckland Dinham PC
Fiona Barrows	Frome TC
Anita Collier	Frome TC
Sally Foster	Nunney PC

Note: Particularly bad weather in the hours leading up to the meeting.

Notes:

1.) Welcome and apologies

Meeting opened by our Chair, Max Wide, with a welcome to Rode given by Peter Travis, Chair of Rode PC. PT highlighting Rode's neighbourhood plan, challenges with speculative development, community projects such as the new community hall, and ongoing efforts to support local bus services

The parish council, chaired by PT, is exploring the development of a new community hall on the village playing field, with recent meetings held to discuss the project's feasibility and potential funding sources. The current site may be sold for housing to support this initiative.

After the withdrawal of all bus services by First Bus a decade ago, the village organised a large protest, resulting in the restoration of a limited service. The parish council now actively supports bus services, producing timetables for each change and encouraging councillors to use the buses

Rode hosts a variety of community events, including a summer fair and a comedy festival featuring nationally recognised performers. The village also boasts a scout group, a school, and a popular post office and café.

PT raised the need for fundraising expertise for the new community hall, referencing the approach taken for the skate park in Frome, where a project-specific fundraiser was sought. FTC colleagues offered support with collaboration and advice.

2.) Update on SALC Grant to Buckland Dinham PC for the Frome Missing Link (FML)

Buckland Dinham PC have successfully submitted a bid to SALC for £10,000 to improve the 'Frome Missing Link'. This bid is designed to improve the link between Selwood Manor and Spring Gardens. Buckland Dinham PC have now raised £35,000 to fund this project. The LCN wish to praise Buckland Dinham PC for their hard work and thanks have been received by Cllr Ros Wyke.

Information below on planned works:

Description (Spring Gardens-Selwood Manor section)	Amount
Signage, temporary path diversion, fencing hire, voluntary labour	1,200
Vegetation & surface rock clearance	215
Stone gabion revetment, galfan baskets, trenching, prepared base (with contractor usage where required)	12,085
Surfacing, timber fencing	3,300
Design Work (Sustrans)	19,800
Total:	£36600

3.) **Connect Somerset Update, Emma Lacey-Williams (Connect Somerset Champion)**

Slides presented by Emma LW and shared with the notes. Emma LW outlined the programme's aims to coordinate early intervention and support for vulnerable families and children across Somerset, describing her role in linking public, voluntary, and community services.

Questions from Peter Travis confirming that Emma LW is employed by FTC rather than SC.

MW encouraged those outside of Frome Town to have the dialogue with Emma. Emma confirmed that she is keen to visit other parishes.

Cllr Dunk asked on the level of signposting on the amount of overlap with village agent. Emma LW confirmed that her signposting is around children and young people rather than debt. Emma LW does not overlap with Village Agents however does meet with them regularly and they attend neighbourhood meetings.

4.) Adult Social Care Update (Mel Lock, Director of Adult Social Care, Somerset Council)

Mel Lock provided a comprehensive update on adult social care and NHS service changes in Somerset, including the integration of care pathways, the shift towards community-based support, the temporary closure and repurposing of community hospital beds, and the use of data and AI for prevention and demand management.

Mel explained the close working relationship between adult social care, village agents, and health services, highlighting the early help offer that diverts non-critical cases from social care to community support, such as memory cafés and carers' groups, often managed by village agents.

Mel detailed the three hospital discharge pathways: home first, bedded intermediate care, and long-term care for complex cases. The strategy prioritises getting people home quickly, with increased investment in intermediate care and a reduction in community hospital beds, including a trial reduction at Frome Community Hospital.

Housing, including homelessness and supported accommodation, now falls under adult social care. Mel noted a shortage of affordable and move-on housing in Somerset, with new developments providing much-needed capacity. The council is seeking further expansion of affordable housing options.

Mel emphasised the importance of vibrant, connected communities in supporting vulnerable residents and reducing demand for acute services.

Mel described the use of AI tools to identify individuals at risk of hospital admission or social care needs, integrating data from health, council tax, and benefits to enable earlier intervention. The council is developing its own AI solutions and exploring collaboration with NHS systems.

Somerset maintains a large network of micro providers offering flexible, often unregistered support services, funded through direct payments. Community and district nurses, managed by Somerset Partnership Trust, provide clinical care, particularly end-of-life support, in coordination with social care and micro providers.

Participants discussed the challenges of communicating NHS service changes, particularly around hospital bed closures, noting delays and the need for better public engagement. Mel acknowledged these issues and outlined steps taken to improve communication and manage transitions.

Mel discussed the financial pressures on adult social care, the use of council tax precepts, and the potential impact of the upcoming Casey Review on funding models. The need for systemic reform and the political challenges of increasing funding was highlighted.

5.) Frome Movement Strategy Update (James Moore, Owen King & Steve Tanner)

Owen King explained that Frome has secured £20,000 from Somerset, with matched funding from the council, to develop a movement strategy that will go beyond the existing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to include public transport, highways, and connectivity with surrounding parishes.

Between FTC and the LCN, we plan to form a working group with representatives from each parish, inviting broad participation to ensure the strategy reflects local priorities. Initial steps include sending out invitations, conducting surveys, and mapping out key movement and connectivity issues. A LCN survey is being designed and will be sent in the new year.

The movement strategy is intended to dovetail with the local transport plan, neighbourhood plans, and other strategic documents, providing a basis for directing resources, influencing Section 106 funding, and supporting infrastructure projects that improve connectivity and health outcomes.

Consultants with experience in LCWIP and local transport planning will be engaged to support the strategy's development. The group aims to complete the strategy within a year, with regular meetings and a clear timeline to maintain momentum.

The strategy will serve as a reference for future funding bids and policy decisions, enabling the council and parishes to advocate for projects

such as new footpaths and improved transport links, and to coordinate efforts across the network.

6.) Local Transport Plan submission update

Somerset's Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a key document setting out how Somerset Council plans and delivers transport across Somerset, it will help ensure that transport supports wider goals, such as improving health and wellbeing, protecting the environment, and supporting the local economy. It's being updated to reflect national policy and challenges faced today.

The Vale of Frome LCN met with Matthew Prince, Subject Matter Expert on Transport Policy in Frome Town Hall, to discuss our response to the LTP as well as other parishes outside of this meeting. The notes have been submitted as part of the consultation

7.) Consultations, Surveys and Opportunities

Update from JM on open surveys and consultations within Somerset Council. JM raised the Somerset LNRS and the Preparedness Survey.

JM also promoted the 'Safer Roads for HGV's' event arranged by Nataliya Willis which will take place in Shape Mendip. Invitation extended over email to parishes lying in the Shepton side of the Vale of Frome.

8.) Working Groups

Our rebooted Vale of Frome LCN Highways Working Group will take place on Wednesday 28th January at 11:00. This will be in person at Frome Town Hall. Highways Colleagues will be in attendance.

Information and dates have been circulated to all previous members of the Highways Working Group and Clerks

Please consider signing up if you can commit the time

9.) Yeovil Maternity Unit

Update received from NHS Somerset regarding the future of the Yeovil Maternity Unit. Information below:

Subject to meeting essential safety criteria, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust plans to reopen the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) and inpatient maternity service at Yeovil District Hospital (YDH) on 21 April 2026.

- The plan to reopen services is complex and working with new paediatric consultants, who join the NHS from November 2025 through to March 2026, and maternity colleagues, many of whom are working in maternity services at Musgrove Park Hospital and Dorset County Hospital
- Since the start of the temporary closures on 19 May up until the week ending Sunday 5 October, 354 babies have been born who would have been born at YDH.
 - 135 were born at Musgrove Park Hospital (MPH)
 - 174 were born at Dorset County Hospital (DCH)
 - 13 at the Royal United Hospital in Bath
 - 9 were born in other hospitals
 - 23 were born at home.

10.) Dates of Next Meeting

Meeting Purpose	Date
Highways Working Group	Wednesday January 28 th at 11:00
Full LCN	Thursday January 29 th at 19:00
Frome Movement Strategy Initial Meeting	Date TBC – Mid February
Full LCN	Thursday 30 th April at 19:00

11.) AOB

Discussion around the focus on the next meeting with an agreement on food resilience. Cllr Boyden also raised the possibility of a future focus on flooding, gritting with attendance from the SRA