

# Local Community Network

## Dowsborough LCN meeting notes Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 Spaxton Village Hall

### Attendees:

Cllr Peter Felton, Chilton Trinity PC  
Cllr Mike Caswell (vice chair)  
Cllr Paul King, Wembdon PC  
Cllr Richard Hubbard, Wembdon PC  
Cllr Connie Sanders  
Cllr Steve Skinner, Kilve PC  
Cllr Simon Stretton, Spaxton PC  
Mike Hodson, Spaxton CLT  
Mark Weston, Rep Ashley Fox MP  
PCSO Trevor Philips  
Anne Shilton, LCN Link Officer for Dowsborough  
Gill Keniston-Goble, LCN Link Officer  
Tom Parkinson, Tech support

### Virtual attendees:

Cllr Hugh Davies  
Loretta Whetlor, SALC  
Cllr Sue Goss, Stogursey PC  
Debbie Harris, Village Agent  
Sam Murrell, LCN Link Officer

### Apologies:

Iain Porter, Quantock Hills National Landscape Team  
Cllr Rosemary Woods  
Cllr Gill Slocombe  
Cllr Chris Morgan (chair)  
John McVerry, Stockland Bristol parish meeting  
Over Stowey PC

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Mike Caswell, vice chair, welcomed all present and online and explained that he was chairing the meeting due to ill health and apologies from the chair.

#### 2. Brief local policing update from PCSO Trevor Phillips

PCSO Trevor Phillips provided an overview of crime statistics and policing coverage in rural areas. The team consists of three PCSO officers covering a wide rural area,

with a focus on antisocial behaviour (ASB), farm thefts, vehicle offenses and fraud, particularly targeting vulnerable sectors of the population such as older people. The age of criminal responsibility is noted as 10 years and educational outreach to primary schools is conducted to inform about the lifelong impact of criminal records. Notably, there has been a rise in fraud cases involving solar panels and doorstep scams.

The challenges of enforcing laws on electric scooters were discussed, highlighting current police policy restrictions on pursuing offenders due to safety concerns following past incidents. E-scooters can be used on private land but not on the public highway. Vehicle clamping has been conducted recently by DVLA, not police, and stolen Land Rovers are a significant issue in rural areas. The PCSO emphasized the importance of community reporting for effective policing and patrol planning.

### 3. Spaxton Community Land Trust presented by Mike Hodson

Mike Hodson from the Spaxton Community Land Trust (SCLT) presented the background and progress of the affordable housing initiative. The CLT was formed following a failed market housing attempt around 2016-2017, emphasizing community control over development to prioritize affordable homes. The CLT operates as a Community Benefit Society under the Financial Conduct Authority and is supported by the Parish Council, with two councillors on its board.

Key steps included conducting a detailed housing needs assessment with a 49% response rate, identifying a requirement for eleven affordable homes (three three-bedroom, six two-bedroom, and two one-bedroom units, including one accessible home). Site selection involved public consultation, initially favouring a High Street location, which was later withdrawn due to probate issues, leading to selection of an alternative site. Extensive surveys (ecological, highway, drainage, crime prevention, landscaping) and legal arrangements have been undertaken, funded initially by a £60,000 grant from Sedgemoor District Council.

The CLT will own the freehold of the properties in perpetuity, leasing them to a housing association for rental at 60-80% of market rates. Continuous community consultation has been a priority throughout the project, which has experienced delays including those caused by COVID-19. The project aims to maintain affordability and community benefit, with the CLT reinvesting income into village initiatives.

### 4 An Introduction to West Somerset Advice by Ian Atkinson, Chief Officer, Citizens Advice West Somerset

Unfortunately the speaker did not arrive at the meeting but subsequently submitted apologies

## 5 Agree notes from last meeting / AGM

Attendance at the last meeting noted 'A N Other' which should have read Cllr Connie Sanders which has been noted, with apologies.

## 6 Actions arising not covered elsewhere

The meeting reviewed minutes from previous sessions and discussed upcoming events including a highways working group meeting planned for 21 October 2025 (now at the youth club by Stogursey's Victory Hall) and a road safety awareness session on 22 October 2025, venue to be confirmed. Traffic modelling events are being organized, with invitations extended to local stakeholders.

Broadband connectivity and digital infrastructure remain significant concerns. Attendees expressed frustration with the lack of progress and the absence of key officers from Somerset Council at recent meetings. There is a call for lead officers and members to engage more actively with the LCN to address rural broadband deficiencies. The MP's efforts in Parliament to highlight broadband issues were acknowledged positively.

## 7 Update from highways working group

The notes from the last meeting in June 2025 will be circulated shortly with apologies for the delay and actions noted which would be brought up at the next meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025. A request was made for a venue for the meeting. (Subsequently Stogursey PC offered the use of the youth club, next to the Victory Hall, which was gratefully accepted.)

A reminder was given of a Road Safety Awareness Event on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025, 10.00 – 13.00, at a venue to be confirmed, was given.

## 8 Report from Parish Council Chairs meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2025

The chairs of the parish councils had been invited to a recent meeting to discuss the likely focus of the LCN for the remainder of this year to the next AGM in June 2026. The suggested that the focus would be on the highways working group as well as broadband connectivity. These suggestions were agreed by those present to be the focus topics.

## 9 Joint rural transport working group with neighbouring LCN(s)

Discussions included the proposal for a joint rural transport working group with neighbouring LCNs to address shared challenges along the A39 corridor, though some scepticism about the usefulness of such a meeting without a clear agenda

was expressed. Issues with bus services were raised, including a recent failure of EDF-provided transport that left passengers stranded.

It was decided that unless there was a specific reason or need for a joint working group to be established, that this suggestion was rejected.

### 10 Any other business

A reminder of the SALC conference on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 at The Canalside, in Bridgwater was given out.

Another reminder of a Prepared Day focusing on emergency and resilience planning on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at Taunton Racecourse was given out.

The Link Officer acknowledged the receipt of a recent letter from Nether Stowey Parish Council stepping back from the LCN. It had been agreed that they would continue to receive the LCN meeting notes, with their agreement and an open door remained should they wish to return at any time. A review of the LCN structure is imminent, with consultants expected to seek input from parish councils. It was always the plan to review the initiative after the initial 24 months. Responses are encouraged to give a good overview of the LCNs, what is working well and not so well.

### 11 Next meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Proposed speakers – a) Sunita Mills, Head of Transportation Somerset Council  
b) A Somerset Council officer and a member with responsibility for connectivity will be requested.

The meeting concluded with thanks to attendees and a reminder of the next scheduled meetings on 10 December 2025, 18 March 2026, and 17 June 2026 (AGM). Proposed future speakers include the head of Transportation at Somerset Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The importance of continued community engagement and support for the LCN was emphasized.

### 12 Schedule of meetings for coming year:

18<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Speaker: Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner)  
17<sup>th</sup> June 2026 (AGM).

Date	Action	Completed by
17/09/25	Attendees encouraged to report incidents of ASB and other issues to the Police to ensure accurate data collection and for action to be taken as necessary	Everyone
17/09/25	Highways working group to meet shortly – now set for 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2025	Link officer. Completed.
17/09/25	Invite a Somerset Council officer and member (with the portfolio for Connectivity) to a future meeting, ideally December 2025	Link officer. Completed.
17/09/25	LCN review – request for all to respond to requests for feedback	Everyone
17/09/25	Invite SC's Head of Transport to talk about rural transport	Link Officer – requested for 10/12/25. Accepted.
17/09/25	Invite Police and Crime Commissioner to meeting.	Link Officer – agreed for 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026