

Bridgwater AGM 15th July 2024

1. Elect the Chair of the Local Community Network

Nominations for the position of Chair:

Cllr Diogo Rodriguez from Somerset Council was nominated by Cllr Gill Slocombe from Somerset Council, Cllr Andy Dingwell from Somerset Council seconded this. Cllr Diogo Rodriguez accepted the nomination.

Cllr Tim Manders from Bridgwater Town Council was nominated by Cllr Hilary Bruce from Somerset Council, Cllr Lee Redman from Somerset Council seconded this. Cllr Tim Manders accepted this nomination.

A vote was conducted and resulted in Cllr Diogo Rodriguez duly elected as chair of the Bridgwater LCN.

2. Elect the Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network

Cllr Gill Slocombe from Somerset Council was nominated by Cllr Diogo Rodriguez, Cllr Andy Dingwell from Somerset Council seconded this. Cllr Gill Slocombe accepted the nomination.

The core membership voted in agreement, Cllr Gill Slocombe was duly elected as vice chair of the Bridgwater LCN.

3. Consider the Annual Report on the Local Community Network's work in the last 12 months.

Emmaline Kay, the link officer for the Bridgwater LCN, shared some of the highlights in the annual report, this included the setting up the working group for youth provision which has included mapping provisions and the ActiveTravel working group which has seen connections grow and diverse collaboration across the sector.

Tash Scully from the Youth Alliance/Spark Somerset highlighted the success of the Youth Provision Working Group in mapping youth provision and identifying gaps, emphasizing the importance of collaborative work and communication to support young people.

Mapping Youth Provision: Tash Scully detailed the collaborative efforts of the Youth Provision Working Group, which included mapping existing provisions for young people and identifying gaps in services. The group's work led to the creation of a comprehensive list of youth activities, which was made accessible through Bridgwater Town Council's website.

Collaborative Success: The group's success was attributed to the diverse collaboration across sectors, including VCFSE partners, town council and local businesses. This partnership approach resulted in the formation of a networking group and the launch of a networking event to further support youth provision.

Future Communication Strategies: Discussions within the group led to the exploration of targeted communication strategies to reach different audiences, including young people, families, and the public. Ideas such as engaging media students and developing an app were considered to promote youth provisions effectively.

Active Travel working group; Gary Perrett discussed the achievements and future goals of the Active Travel Working Group, stressing the importance of a team approach to promote active travel and active lifestyle and the need for collaboration across sectors.

Active Travel Priorities: Gary Perrett outlined the Active Travel Working Group's priorities, emphasizing the collective contribution of the LCN to the active travel agenda. The group's focus included promoting health and well-being through active travel and active lifestyles, as well as the development of an active travel hub in Bridgwater.

Collaborative Efforts: The group's collaborative efforts were highlighted, with the involvement of various sectors contributing to the active travel priorities. This included partnerships with town councils, local businesses, and campaigns such as the Bridgwater Area Cycling campaign.

Challenges and Team Approach: Gary Perrett emphasized the need for a team approach to drive forward initiatives such as Bike-ability in schools and employee engagement in businesses. He called for the formation of subgroups to focus on specific areas and for LCNs to support each other in promoting active travel.

4. Overview of highlights from LCNs across Somerset

The LCN link officer present provided an overview of the work of LCNs across Somerset. More information is available in the slide pack.

5. Consider the priorities and areas of focus for the LCN for the next 12 months

Concerns about Antisocial Behaviour: Participants raised concerns about antisocial behaviour in Bridgwater, discussing the need for better

engagement with the police and community forums to address these issues and improve safety.

Addressing Antisocial Behaviour: Participants expressed concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, particularly in the town centre, and the need for improved engagement with the police to address these issues. The discussion highlighted the importance of reporting incidents to ensure police action and the potential role of the LCN in facilitating better communication between residents and law enforcement.

Community Forum suggestion: The suggestion of establishing a community forum was discussed as a means to provide a platform for residents to engage with the project and raise issues related to antisocial behaviour, with the aim of fostering a safer community environment.

Support for Small Businesses: Participants discussed the need for better support for small businesses in Bridgwater, including engagement with the police to address antisocial behaviour, creating a unique selling point for the town, and providing a framework for business incubation.

Business Support Needs: Business owners voiced the need for better support mechanisms for small businesses, including addressing safety concerns due to antisocial behaviour that affects customer footfall. The discussion also touched on the potential for creating a unique selling point for Bridgwater to attract more visitors and support local businesses.

Business Incubation Framework: The idea of establishing a business incubation framework was proposed, which would provide a space for networking, experience sharing, and co-working opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs in Bridgwater.

Accessibility and Community Engagement: Participants expressed concerns about accessibility and community engagement, suggesting the need for better transportation solutions and initiatives to declutter and clear homes to improve living conditions.

Transportation Solutions: Accessibility issues were discussed, with a focus on the need for better transportation solutions to facilitate community engagement and access to activities, especially for the elderly and those with mobility challenges.

Decluttering Initiatives: The discussion included the need for initiatives to help residents declutter and clear their homes, which would improve living

conditions and well-being. Suggestions included organizing skip days to provide residents with an opportunity to dispose of unwanted items and create a cleaner living environment.

6. Agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

Monday 9th September 2024

Actions table		
Date asked	Information	Responsibility
	Antisocial behaviour – engage with the PCC to address antisocial behaviour issues and drug issues in the town centre	
	Business support - Investigate how Frome encouraged creatives in small shops and apply similar strategies in Bridgwater.	
	Accessibility – Review parking and accessibility in the town centre to make it easier for residents and visitors	
	Night Time Economy – Invite street pastors to share insights on the night time economy and vulnerable individuals at night	
	Gravity Campus Engagement – Consider how Bridgwater LCN wants to engage with the Gravity Enterprise Zone Local Community Forum.	