

## **Local Community Network Meeting Notes**

Meeting Title: Local Community Network: Exmoor AGM

Date: Thursday 5 June 2025

Time: 7:00pm – 9:27pm

Location: The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross TA24 7DL

### **LCN Core Membership Attendance:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)	Somerset Council
Cllr Frances Nicholson	Somerset Council
Andrew Sellick	Brompton Ralph Parish Council
Sarah Buchanan (Clerk)	Brompton Regis Parish Council
Cllr Jon Levenson	Cutcombe Parish Council
Cllr Nick Thwaites	Dulverton Town Council
Cllr Oliver Edwards	Exford Parish Council
Cllr Francis Schott	Exmoor Parish Council
Cllr Janette Sapsford	Exton Parish Council
Cllr Stephen Kimsey	Huish Champflower Parish Council
Cllr Mark Bolland	Luxborough Parish Council
Cllr Duncan McCanlis	Porlock Parish Council
Cllr Dan Barber	Skilgate Parish Meeting
Cllr Katy Attwater	Timberscombe Parish Council
Cllr Colin Wilkins	Winsford Parish Council
Cllr Tony Howard	Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council
Cllr Barbara O Keefe	Wootton Courtenay Parish Council
PC James Calloway	Avon and Somerset Police

### **Officer Attendance:**

Sam Murrell (LCN Link Officer), Kali Martin (SC Highways),

## Other attendees

Patricia Bainbridge (Clerk)  
Cllr Roger Foxwell  
Cllr Eric Norman  
Cllr Margaret Rawle  
Bob Fisher  
Lesley Webb (Clerk)  
Rebecca Tomlinson (Clerk)  
Sgt Naomi Baker  
Ian Atkinson  
Cheryl Brooks

Brompton Ralph Parish Council  
Cutcombe Parish Council  
Cutcombe Parish Council  
Dulverton Town Council  
Exmoor Parish Council  
Timberscombe Parish Council  
Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council  
Avon and Somerset Police  
West Somerset Advice Bureau  
West Somerset Advice Bureau

## Summary of discussion:

### Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Item:

#### 1. Election of Chairperson

As the meeting was quorate, nominations were called for the position of Chair.

Cllr Steven Pugsley was proposed by Cllr Frances Nicholson, (SC) and seconded by Tony Howard (Withypool & Hawkridge PC). There were no other proposals, so Cllr Pugsley was duly elected.

He thanked the LCN attendees for their continued support and confidence and then presided over the remainder of the meeting.

#### 2. Election of Vice Chairperson

Although absent, Mike Ellicott was proposed by the Chair to continue in the role of Vice Chair of the LCN. This was seconded by Oliver Edwards (Exford PC). No other nominations were received so Mike Ellicott was appointed.

#### 3. To receive any apologies for absence

Matthew Headley (Brompton Regis) Chris Dubery (Dulverton), Mike Ellicott & Jeremy Hickman (Exford), Ruth McArthur (ENPA), Sally Moran & Norma Martin (Clatworthy PC), Jan Aldridge (Brushford PC Clerk), Ruth McArthur (ENPA) Philip Collings (DSFRS) Christine Dubery (Dulverton TC), Annie Cole (Magna), Fran A Brook (Upton PC), Fodo Higginson (SALC), Roger Webber (Selworthy and MW PC), Andrew Bray (Wootton Courtenay PC) Colin McDonald (SC Rural Housing), Anne Shilton (SC Link Officer)

#### 4. Approve the minutes of the last meeting

The notes from the previous meeting had been circulated with the agenda pack. They were approved.

#### 5. Matters arising (not part of later agenda items)

##### **Somerset Council Car Parking Policy Update:**

The update to Somerset Council members is attached to this report. Parishes were urged to feed into the consultation as soon as possible.

##### **Somerset Council Boundary Review Update:**

The draft recommendations are now open to the next stage of public consultation. The proposed divisions for Exmoor include Exmoor East and Exmoor West. Exmoor East will include the Brendon Hills parishes and run north to the coast at Dunster, while Exmoor West will cover areas from Brushford to the coastal parishes. The next stage of the consultation had been launched, and parishes can see the proposals at [Somerset | LGBCE](#).

At the present time there were no proposed changes to the LCN boundary or core membership although this may flex over time.

##### **SALC Health and Wellbeing Fund**

The Moorland Foodbank had managed to secure further seed grant funding to support their aims to become more sustainable and work towards becoming a community Hub.

Porlock Parish Council had made a successful application to SALC to support a community hub project in the north of the LCN area.

*Post minute note: The SALC grant programme reopens for applications on 30th June. Focus will be on smaller grants (max £10k) and small parishes, with dedicated priority around community plans and reviews which include parish commitment to longer term delivery. More information will be available in the SALC newsletter now and website soon.*

#### 6. Avon and Somerset Police

The police provided a verbal report which is attached to these notes.

There were questions from the floor concerning County Lines and Driving under the Influence of drugs. PC James Calloway said that the police would always act on intelligence, so if there were concerns it needed to be reported via the telephone or on the website.

Some questions were also asked about speeding, anti-social driving and electric scooters. The police had the power to seize electric scooters if they were being

used on the highway. (They can be used on private land, providing the landowner has granted permission). Again, it was important that any concerns were reported. The police were thanked for their attendance and then left the meeting.

## **7. A presentation from Citizens Advice West Somerset (CAWS) by Ian Atkinson, Chief Officer**

Ian Atkinson presented a series of slides highlighting the work of CAWS within the Exmoor LCN and neighboring areas. (The slide pack is attached).

The presentation was well received, and the parishes recognised the invaluable help and support that the charity provided. CAWS would like to extend their outreach capability and asked if parishes on the west side of Exmoor could provide some meeting space where they could meet clients. They were keen to engage with Exford PC, Exmoor and Withypool & Hawkridge in particular. Ian was happy that their contact information was shared.

[ian.atkinson@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk](mailto:ian.atkinson@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk)

[Cheryl.brooks@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk](mailto:Cheryl.brooks@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk).

A request was also made that Cheryl meet with the Moorland Foodbank Trustees to consider ways in which support could be offered to their clients. CAWS already have working relationships with the other foodbanks within the area.

## **8. Progress on Devolution from Somerset Council**

Cllr Pugsley had asked that this item was placed on the agenda, so that the Exmoor parishes were minded that discussions were still taking place. He emphasised the need to discuss the devolution of services, particularly as parishes need to plan their precepts and understand potential changes in service responsibilities.

He had invited Sara Skirton, Service Director for Localities, Partnerships and Culture to attend to discuss her report which had been presented at Somerset Council Corporate and Resources committee. (This had been circulated with the agenda papers). Unfortunately, Sara was unable to attend on this occasion, but was prepared to come to a future meeting, or do an online briefing via Teams if that was preferable.

It was requested that an online briefing was set up to explore the options available to the smaller rural parishes and how these could be progressed.

## 9. Exmoor National Park Authority Issues (ENPA)

ENP were not present at the meeting, which was considered disappointing. Cllr Oliver Edwards (Exford PC) launched a lively discussion on the subject of “Wild Camping”, which was having a detrimental effect on local businesses and the environment. He wanted to know what steps were being taken by ENPA and Somerset Council Highways to mitigate this and deter camper vans and caravans from parking in lay-bys and car parks overnight.

It was agreed that this item would be added to the next Highways subgroup agenda, when ENPA would be present to comment.

## 10. Update on Working Groups

**a. Highways** – Kali Martin. The notes from the previous meeting of the subgroup had been circulated with agenda pack. Kali provided verbal updates on some of the key issues, but said it was a constantly changing picture. There were several large resurfacing schemes scheduled to take place, but this was weather dependent and liable to change if the optimum conditions were not met.

He was doing his best to keep the parishes updated and would email them the relevant information when it was available.

Most issues would be progressed at the next Highways subgroup meeting, which had not been diarised. It was provisionally agreed to hold a meeting on Friday 11 July, hopefully at the Dulverton Sports Pavilion.

Kali was thanked for his regular attendance at the LCN meetings, which was greatly appreciated.

**b. Housing** – Colin McDonald’s Rural Housing role has been extended for another 3 years. It was decided to schedule quarterly meetings of the working group for the next 12 months. It was hoped that a report could be put together over the summer outlining the current housing challenges and possible mitigations that Exmoor presents.

**c. Economic Subgroup** – It was agreed that the working group should continue for the coming year, working with Exmoor National Park and stakeholders to further the LCNs ambitions.

*Post minute note: Emma Thomasson to provide an update at the September LCN meeting on how Visit Exmoor supports local businesses within the hospitality and leisure sector.*

## **11. To consider the Local Community Network Annual Report for 2024-25**

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting, providing insight into the work of the LCNs across the county. In addition, Sam shared some slides which were specific to the Exmoor LCN and highlighted key areas of success in the last year.

The slide pack is attached with the notes, but the key achievements were: -

- Revitalising the Moorland (formerly Dulverton) Foodbank, and ensuring it was launched on a sustainable footing in a new premises at the Riverside Centre, Dulverton.
- Highways, Economic Regeneration and Housing Sub- Groups, continuing to build on the work from the inaugural year.
- Good attendance at meetings ensuring that the LCN is representative of its membership and invites collaboration from stakeholders and partners.
- Guest speakers on a variety of topics, including the Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner, Clare Moody; Cllr Theo Butt Philip (Executive Member from Somerset Council) and Nicola Dawson (Somerset Council, Community Resilience). We also have regular attendance from Somerset Council Highways (Kali Martin/Kevin Bridgwater), and Avon and Somerset Police Officers.

## **12. To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the LCN in the next 12 months**

It was decided to continue with the working groups that have already been established. Namely, the Highways subgroup, Economic Development and Housing. (These grouped various key themes together which are covered in the slide deck).

The Highways working group meetings have been scheduled for the coming year and hold the date invitations will be sent out soon. It is hoped to use the Dulverton Sports Pavilion as a venue. (A Friday 11 July 2025, meeting was proposed in order to meet before September. Sam will check with Christine Dubery and then this will be finalised).

Dates for the other subgroups will be confirmed once partners and stakeholders have been contacted.

**13. To agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months.**

<b>Proposed Exmoor LCN Dates Venues to be confirmed</b>	<b>Highways Sub-Group Dates – Dulverton Sports Pavilion</b>
Thursday 4 September at 6.30pm including Annual Highways Meeting (Winter Operations)	Friday 17 October 10am – 1pm
Thursday 6 November at 7pm	Friday 28 November 10am – 1pm
Thursday 15 January at 7pm	Friday 20 February 10am – 1pm
Thursday 5 March at 7pm	Friday 17 April 10am – 1pm
Thursday 4 June at 7pm (AGM)	Friday 10 July 10am – 1pm