



# Local Community Network

## Levels and Moors LCN Meeting Notes- 2<sup>nd</sup> October at Middlezoy Village Hall

**Chaired by Sean Dromgoole (Chair of L and M LCN)**

### **Attendees:**

- **Emily Pearlstone (Unitary Councillor and Vice Chair of L and M LCN)**
- Gerard Tucker (Aller and Chair of L and M Active Travel)
- Neil McGrath (Burrowbridge)
- Marcus Hembrow (Curry Rivel and Chair of L and M Highways)
- Bill Covington (Drayton)
- David Vigar (High Ham)
- Becky Turner (Middlezoy)
- Paul Baker (Middlezoy)
- Andrew Flower (Muchelney)
- Mike Dennis (North Curry)
- Liz Parfitt (Westonzoyland)
- Philip Sharatt (A Somerset Pilgrimage)
  
- James Moore (Somerset Council- Link Officer)
- Alex Mountain (Somerset Council- Link Officer)
- Callum Davey (Somerset Council- IT Support)

### **Virtual attendees:**

- Nancy Green (High Ham)
- Julia Gadd (Huish Episcopi)
- Lorraine Vawn Davis (Isle Abbots)
- Helen Barrington (Lyng)
- Xanthe Waite (RSPB and Landscape Recovery)

### **Apologies:**

- Mike Stanton (Unitary Councillor)
- Phil Stone (North Curry)

### **1. Welcome and Approval of AGM Notes**

AGM Notes accepted and no edits suggested.

## 2. Local Plan Update

An update on the draft engagement report was discussed. This includes the input of Levels and Moors LCN through the main consultation sessions and 'mini' Levels and Moors local plan engagement workshop. The link to the full plan is here: [Somerset Local Plan 2045](#)

The discussion is summarised below:

- **Housing Concerns:** Participants expressed a preference for more employment land and less housing. There was concern about the lack of variety in housing types, especially the dominance of three-bedroom homes and the need for more bungalows and starter homes.
- **Employment Land:** The need to retain employment land in developments was emphasized, countering claims of lack of demand and highlighting its importance for local jobs and reducing commuting costs.

Query on what sustainable and resilient places included.

This was discussed, how it was in reference to flooding and drainage infrastructure.

Flooding and drainage were major concerns, with calls to avoid building in floodplains and to ensure proper water and sewage infrastructure. The failure to consider drainage and sewage systems holistically was highlighted. This was in reference to where the drainage connects to and the impact of it further down the system.

Consideration of national legislation and context of planning in Somerset, with the impact of the movement of water.

Query about the Sustainability Criteria-The traditional "Big 5" sustainability criteria (school, shop, recreation field, place of worship, public transport) were discussed, with questions about whether these requirements are still relevant in the current plan.

The update included the reference to Leisure, Social spaces and Digital Connectivity comments that were included in the local plan. There was reference to the ongoing loneliness project.

Statutory consultation expected in early 2026. The group agreed to review the published report collectively and submit an agreed response.

Discussion included the percentage of affordable housing required in new developments, the challenges in negotiating with developers, and the need to prioritize residents for social housing.

There was clarification on the criteria for Social Housing and the Homefinder process, and the local connection needed for being on Homefinder.

*Post minute note: Further information on the Homefinder criteria is here: [Homefinder Somerset](#)*

*“You can apply to join the Homefinder Somerset scheme if all of the following are true:*

- You are over the age of 16*
- You are not subject to immigration control*
- You have a local connection to Somerset*

*You will have a local connection to Somerset if you have lived in Somerset for the last 2 years, or have previously lived in Somerset for 3 out of the last 5 years. A local connection can also be established if you have employment in Somerset or where you have immediate family that have lived in Somerset for more than 5 years.”*

### **3. Local Transport Discussion and Mapping**

James supported with an update on what the local transport plan is and how other LCNs responded to the consultation.

The Local Transport Plan sets out the vision for transport in Somerset over the next 20–30 years, focusing on where transport infrastructure and services should develop. This is a refresh from the plan in 2013.

It covers integration of different transport modes, prioritizing sustainable and community-based solutions, and aims to support all users, including rural and urban areas.

This includes the Strategy for Rural Somerset, which includes a mention of the Strawberry Line.

The group agreed to submit a letter as an LCN, based on this discussion for the consultation.

Key elements that the group wanted to include in the letter going to the Active Travel lead are:

- The proposals for new railway stations (notably at Langport and Somerton) and the need for an integration between bus and train timetables. This will address parking capacity concerns at the stations.
- The need for buses that are suitable for country lanes was discussed.
- Support for ‘quiet lanes’ in Somerset
- need for flexible rural transport options (like Slinky),
- maintenance and resilience of road infrastructure, and the importance of active travel (walking, cycling) quiet lanes.
- Impact of national infrastructure decisions (e.g., A303/A358 upgrades), and the need for both digital and non-digital booking options for rural transport.

There was discussion regarding frequent road closures and the need for collaborative approach from authorities.

The group fed back that the Lead Member Cllr Richard Wilkins had spoken about the need for this and was encouraging it.

They had seen the improvements of rural roads, due to full resurfacing, such as in Isle Abbots, and were grateful that rural roads were being looked at.

For concerns about the quality of repairs completed by contractors. The group is encouraged to put this on Report It, so that the Streetworks team can contact them and have them repair works.

The plan is currently in draft and will be taken to committee for an agreement on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The policy lead has agreed for a submission to be included from the LCN.

*Post minute note: Slides that are referencing this are included in the email with these notes.*

*The letter is attached to the email*

### **Step, Ride, Thrive**

Linked into the discussion about transport, the group was given an update about Step, Ride, Thrive and how they have expanded the #668 bus route by including a new stop at the Avalon Marshes Centre by using the SALC Health and Wellbeing Grant.

They had used the grant to pay for the stop, with the help of Transport team within Somerset Council.

A query was raised about SALC funding, and whether there was any more funding.

*Post minute note: Upon consultation with Fodo and Lilly from SALC, we have clarified. Slides are attached with the email with these notes.*

*The grant is officially closed but Fodo and Lilly are still here to continue supporting parishes with any projects related to health & wellbeing – perhaps in the form of support for Community Plan development, running small projects/events or developing connections etc.*

*There is a small pot of money left over to help support small projects. There is further information on the attached slides.*

### **Slinky Service Update**

Slinky is a flexible bus service operating across 6 regional areas in Somerset.

The group had an update about the Slinky Service, and it's move towards a digital element. The Levels and Moors area comes under 3 different Slinky geographical areas (in the maps below), that are moving towards a digital service.

The Slinky Digital Initiative is funded by the Government's Bus Service Improvement grant and is part of Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The areas included in the digital move are: Sedgemoor, Somerton and Taunton and Wellington.

You can register by downloading the Slinky App or using the Slinky booking page. The non- digital service is funded by Somerset Council.

The group stated the importance of keeping the non-digital part of the Slinky service to prevent rural isolation. They would like to advocate for this to be available, and included in the letter to the Transport Plan.

The link for information is here: [Slinky Services](#)



This includes Westonzoyland and Middlezoy.



This includes North Curry.

## **4. Update on Working Groups**

### **Health and Wellbeing Working Group**

Philip Sharatt provided an update on the Health and Wellbeing project on Loneliness.

An email has gone out to parish clerks, alongside engaging with relevant organisations (Age UK, Village Agents and Thrive). The email includes a blank spreadsheet to be filled with activities in the area.

He spoke about the level of demand for resources on rural isolation and loneliness, and how the scale of the issue had been surprising.

There has been a lot of information received about how communities are addressing this.

Philip will be travelling around the LCN to collect further information, and a final version of the directory will be out before the end of this month.

This will mean the LCN can start to see the gaps in the LCN, and how they can address them.

Positive examples were shared of rural settings providing beneficial environments for mentoring and support, highlighting the unique advantages of rural communities for wellbeing initiatives.

Liz Parfitt mentioned a list of activities that had been shared from Care Providers and if there was anything similar for the Levels and Moors LCN. The discussed image is below.

Next steps include finalizing and distributing the directory, encouraging parishes to contribute missing information, and exploring ways to better publicize and expand support networks.

*Post minute note: Image from Liz Parfitt from Westonzoyland*

Event	Venue	Town/City	Postcode	Days	Start Time	End Time	Contact
Coffee Morning with Village Agent	Bishops Lydeard Village Hall	Bishops Lydeard	TA4 3LH	Every Tuesday	9:30am	12:30pm	01823 430421
Flexercise with Age UK	Bishops Lydeard Village Hall	Bishops Lydeard	TA4 3LH	Every Monday	2:00pm	3:00pm	01823 345610
Seated Exercise with Age UK	Bishops Lydeard Village Hall	Bishops Lydeard	TA4 3LH	Every Monday	2:00pm	3:00pm	01823 345610
Talking Memory Café	St Lukes Centre	Cotford St Luke	TA4 1HX	Third Thursday of each month	10:00am	12:00pm	
The Hub Community Café	St Lukes Centre	Cotford St Luke	TA4 1HX	Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	10:00am	1:30pm	
Warm Space Wednesdays	St Michael's Church	Creech St Michael	TA3 5PW	Every Wednesday	3:00pm	4:00pm	01823 444793
Short Mat Bowls	Creech St Michael Village Hall	Creech St Michael	TA3 5QQ	Every Friday	7:00pm	8:00pm	01823 397269
Talking Café	Fivehead Baptist Church	Fivehead	TA3 6PD	First Thursday of the month	1:30pm	3:30pm	01450 281060
North Curry Film Club	North Curry Village Hall	North Curry	TA3 6NQ	Fourth Wednesday of every month	7:00am	Onwards	01823 490404
Café Connet	North Petherton Community Centre	North Petherton	TA6 6QA	Second Tuesday of each month	10:00am	1:30pm	07818 130 235
Skittles Coffee Shop	Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall	Norton Fitzwarren	TA2 6RQ	Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	10:00am	2:00pm	01823 257503
In Stiches @ St George's	Ruishton Church Meeting Room	Ruishton	TA3 5LL	Every other Friday	10:00am	12:00pm	01823 443019
Ruishton Coffee Stop	Ruishton Village Hall	Ruishton	TA3 5JD	Every Tuesday	2:00pm	3:00pm	07958 574905
Art Group	Ruishton Village Hall	Ruishton	TA3 5JD	Every Monday	9:30am	11:30am	01823 443408
Breast Friends Support Group	Taunton	Taunton	TA1 4TP	Second Tuesday of every month	9:30am	12:00pm	
Bridge for Beginners	Temple Methodist Church	Taunton	TA1 3PY	Every Wednesday	2:00pm	3:00pm	01823 275765
Chatty Café	Taunton Minster	Taunton	TA1 1SQ	Third Friday of every month	10:00am	11:00am	01823 272441
Community Lunch Club	Abbeyleigh North Field Court	Taunton	TA1 1AD	Every day	12:00pm	11:00am	01823 339328
Dementia Café	The Manor Care Home	Taunton	TA1 5HF	First Tuesday of every month	2:30pm	4:30pm	01823 763100
Energy Saving Advice	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3KZ	One Thursday a month	1:00pm	3:00pm	0300 123 2224
Flexercise with Age UK	Staplegrave Village Hall	Taunton	TA2 6AL	Every Tuesday	12:30pm	1:30pm	01823 345624
Good Afternoon Choir	Temple Methodist Church	Taunton	TA1 3PY	Every Tuesday	2:00pm	4:00pm	01823 275765
Health walks with SASP	Various Locations	Taunton	Various Locations	Every Wednesday	10:15am	Onwards	walks@sasp.co.uk
Indoor Curling with Age UK	Temple Methodist Church	Taunton	TA1 3PY	Every Thursday	10:30am	11:30am	01823 275765
Knit and Natter	Salvation Army	Taunton	TA1 3AA	Every Monday	10:30am	11:30am	01823 284291
Knitwits	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3RZ	Every Wednesday	2:00pm	3:00pm	0300 123 2224
Lighthouse Café - Mind in Somerset	North Street Church	Taunton	TA1 1LW	Every Monday	10:00am	12:00pm	01823 271353
Lunch Club	Salvation Army	Taunton	TA1 3AA	Every Wednesday	11:00am	1:00pm	01823 284291
Mahjong Club	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3RZ	Every Tuesday	10:00am	12:30pm	0300 123 2224
Memory Café with Alzheimers Society	St James Church Hall	Taunton	TA1 1JS	Fortnightly on Tuesday	10:00am	12:00pm	01823 272931
Mens Singing Group	Salvation Army	Taunton	TA1 3AA	Every Tuesday	7:00pm	8:00pm	01823 284291
MOTO (Members on their own)	Temple Methodist Church	Taunton	TA1 3PY	Third Monday of every month	2:15pm	3:15pm	01823 275765
Movement to Music with Age UK	YMCA	Taunton	TA1 2LB	Every Tuesday	10:30am	11:30am	01823 274667
On your mind	Temple Methodist Church	Taunton	TA1 3PY	Every Wednesday	10:30am	11:30am	01823 275765
Saturday Crafts	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3RZ	One Saturday a month	10:00am	12:00pm	0300 123 2224
Scrabble Club	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3RZ	Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month	2:00pm	3:00pm	0300 123 2224
Strong and Steady with Age UK	Comeytrove Village Hall	Taunton	TA1 4TY	Every Monday	12:00pm	1:00pm	01823 345614
Strong and Steady with Age UK	The Trident	Taunton	TA1 5NN	Every Wednesday	11:00am	12:00pm	01823 345614
Strong and Steady with Age UK	The Trident	Taunton	TA1 5NN	Every Wednesday	12:15pm	1:15pm	01823 345614
Strong and Steady with Age UK	Staplegrave Village Hall	Taunton	TA2 6AL	Every Monday	10:00am	11:00am	01823 345614
Tai Chi with Age UK	The Trident	Taunton	TA1 5NN	Every Wednesday	2:30pm	3:30pm	01823 345610
Tech Help	Taunton Library	Taunton	TA1 3RZ	Every Thursday	11:00am	12:00pm	0300 123 2224
Together in Sport with reminiscence Learning	Somerset County Cricket Ground	Taunton	TA1 1JT	Every Monday	10:00am	12:30pm	01823 668676
Café Connet	Wellsprings Community Church	Taunton	TA2 7NL	Every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday	10:30am	1:00pm	07896 677 998
Talking Café	YMCA	Taunton	TA1 2LB	Every other Thursday	10:00am	12:00pm	01823 274667
Pilates at Medi Needs	Praana Wellness Studio	Taunton	TA1 1UB	Every Thursday	10:30am	12:30pm	01823 277755
Coffee Connect	Trull Church Community Centre	Taunton	TA3 7JZ	First Tuesday of each month	10:30am	12:00pm	01823 330812
Quiz Night	The Wyvern Club	Taunton	TA1 3BJ	Second Friday of each month	7:15pm	Onwards	01823 284591
Talk and Tea	St Andrews Church	Taunton	TA2 6HU	Every Friday	1:30pm	3:30pm	01823 332531
Tai Chi and Qi Gong	Bishops Hull Hub	Taunton	TA1 5EB	Every Tuesday	1:30pm	2:30pm	07880 555 984
Yoga - All Abilities at Medineeds	Praana Wellness Studio	Taunton	TA1 1UB	Every Friday	4:00pm	5:00pm	01823 277755
Rocelia and Kurling	Wellington Rugby Club	Wellington	TA21 8LL	Every Wednesday	11:00am	12:00pm	01823 345624
Funday Friday with Reminiscence Learning	Rockwell Green Christian Fellowship	Wellington	TA21 9BZ	Every Friday	10:30am	1:00pm	01823 668676
Movement to Music with Age UK	Scout Club HQ	Wellington	TA21 8AQ	Every Tuesday	10:00am	11:00am	01823 345624
Seated Movement to Music with Age UK	Wellington Rugby Club	Wellington	TA21 8LL	Every Tuesday	12:00pm	1:00pm	01823 345624
Tai Chi with Age UK	Wellington Rugby Club	Wellington	TA21 8LL	Every Friday	11:00am	12:00pm	01823 345610
Community Library	Wellington Community Centre	Wellington	TA21 8HN	Every Wednesday	10:00am	12:00pm	01823 666233
Community Coffee Morning	Wellington Community Centre	Wellington	TA21 8HN	Second Friday of each month	10:30am	12:00pm	01823 666233
Flexercise	West Monkton Village Hall	West Monkton	TA2 8NE	Every Thursday	9:30am	10:30am	07764 301304

If you would like your activity to feature in the next 'What's on Where' guide please call us on 01823 211121  
This guide has been carefully compiled by Home Instead but we cannot take responsibility for any errors or omissions to any business listed.

## Highways Working Group- Marcus Hembrow

The information sheet was discussed on the Report It process and who to escalate queries to if needed. It includes connect maps for East and West areas, and how to escalate an issue after using Report It, for specific concerns (traffic, bridges, lighting, rights of way).

The sheet includes references to documents that have been circulated previously, and parishes can request these to be sent out again through the link officer too.

There is an emphasis on ensuring this information is accessible to all parish clerks and encouraging its use as a primary reference for reporting and resolving highways matters.

There was a query about the accuracy of traffic data used in planning decisions, noting that some data is outdated and advocating for more information about this process.

Ongoing efforts include supporting parishes in reporting issues, tracking the quality of road repairs, and ensuring better communication and coordination around road closures and maintenance.

The information sheet document is included in the email out with these notes

### **Levels and Moors Active Travel and Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group**

The group hasn't met recently, but a date in the diary will be sent out. This will be focusing on the Quiet Lanes idea, and how Somerset Council could be supporting this.

In terms of the Curry Rivel, Drayton and Langport link, Curry Rivel has taken possession of 1250 tonnes of stone from the EA and they expressed thanks to Drayton in supporting the movement of it through Drayton in tractors and trailers. 47 movements in one day. They moved cars to the pub car park to support this.

The stone will be used to join Curry Rivel with Frog Lane into Langport, Black Bridge and Huish Episcopi through 1.2 kilometres of path. They are hoping to have the path open for the summer. The stone has meant they have been able to use reserves to create the path.

The EA has stone that people can be acquired (30,000 tonnes) with the appropriate licenses.

The Landscape Recovery program was going to support on accessing the countryside with accessing the countryside.

The Langport and Aller section has positive news, landowners and councils are comfortable with the upgrade of an existing path from the viaduct on the River Parrot through to North Street in Langport. This will be a year-round accessible path.

Langport and Huish Episcopi are funding a new topping of gravel on the path of Cocklemoor and Black Bridge. It has been used by tens of thousands of people a year, and therefore it has needed replacing after 6 years.

The Cross LCN Working Group has had a session about software called "U", which you can watch on YouTube. The link is here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCM8xvYEFcY&list=PLh0y9TznwF8Mqm8p7fw6M\\_wvXVK2Vt3X\\_&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCM8xvYEFcY&list=PLh0y9TznwF8Mqm8p7fw6M_wvXVK2Vt3X_&index=7)

A section of the Strawberry Line is being opened on the 14<sup>th</sup> November.

## 5. Date and Venues of future meetings / Actions/ AOB

*Community Development Review*- Being undertaken by partners Citizen Network. This review is happening at a time when the government have announced the Pride of Place strategy and are looking to mandate Neighbourhood governance structures and we are looking to this review to inform our practice here in Somerset, in line with this new guidance.

There is an opportunity for you to input into the review by completing the survey here <https://tally.so/r/m6qpEk> by the 17th October.

Some of you will be invited to take part in focus groups or one to one interviews and we would like to thank you in advance for taking up these opportunities to inform how Somerset Council works with its communities and providing an insight into current Engagement and Community Development activity as well as informing future ways of working.

Further information is attached but has already been sent out.

*Somerset Nature Recovery Strategy*- The strategy has two main parts: a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map. The Statement of Biodiversity Priorities outlines the strategy's objectives, informed by input from local stakeholders and other relevant plans. It also details how to make these goals happen with real actions on the ground. The Local Habitat Map shows where the actions can be delivered.

Ends 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025- [Somerset's Nature Recovery Strategy – Consultation](#)

*Somerset Parking Consultation*- The consultation on parking charges is about introducing Sunday charges in Somerset Council Car parts. The proposal to consult on the charges is approved by Exec and gives the public the chance to have their say before any final decisions are taken.

Ends 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025- [Have your say on Sunday parking charges proposal](#)

The dates and locations of the next Levels and Moors LCN meetings are (they are subject to change based on officer availability)

- 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025- Online only at 7pm- *Agreed to have in person too, Link Officer will book a venue*
- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026- Edgar Hall, Somerton at 7pm
- 25<sup>th</sup> June- The Charltons Community Centre- change in start time- 5:30 and finish at 8pm- *Will need to be confirmed by the group*
  
- Parish Conference- Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October
- Somerset Prepared- 15<sup>th</sup> October
- Road Safety West- 22<sup>nd</sup> October at County Hall – *change of date*
- Road Safety East- 29<sup>th</sup> October at Shape Mendip
  
- Highways Working Groups dates:

- 11<sup>th</sup> December 25- online- Public Works Portal- with colleagues
- 11<sup>th</sup> March 26 – 10am- 12- in person in CRVH- no colleagues
- 11<sup>th</sup> June 26- online with colleagues

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Send letter to Active Travel Lead on behalf of the LCN	Chair and Link Officer-completed
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Review Local Plan after next consultation, and book in a session for the LCN	Link Officer-ongoing
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Find out about SALC funding	Link Officer-completed
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Query about the Sustainability Criteria-The traditional "Big 5" sustainability criteria (school, shop, recreation field, place of worship, public transport) were discussed, with questions about whether these requirements are still relevant in the current plan.	Link Officer to raise in SC
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Active Travel Working Group Date- Meeting Date to be booked and publicised	GT and Link Officer-ongoing
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Meeting to discuss the Community Working Review and feed it back in as an LCN- in the next couple of weeks to meet and then feedback to the consultants.	SD, EP and Parishes
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Venue for December Meeting	Link Officer
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Review and decide on the change of time for the meeting on 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	All