



Local Community Network

Yearly Report 2023/2024

Hestercombe



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Local Community Networks (LCNs)

Purpose

“To be the focus for community development, engagement and partnership working at local level; improving the outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and partners.”

Map

There are 18 LCNs in total.

They cover every city, town, and parish within the local authority area.

Full details of each LCN, including their demographics, characteristics, agendas, and meeting dates, can be found online.

Please visit the following webpage:

www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/



Hestercombe LCN

Our beautiful Hestercombe LCN
parishes ...



Kings Cliff, North Petherton



Fyne Court, Broomfield



Kingston St Mary Village Hall



The Maypole, Thurloxtton



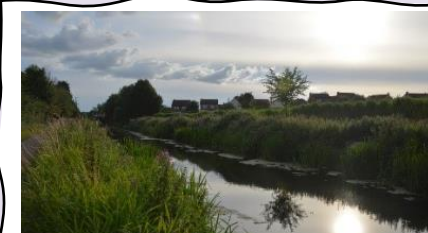
Coombe Lane, West Monkton



Lynch Gate, Cheddon Fitzpaine



Durston Village



Bridgwater to Taunton Canal
at Creech St Michael

Chair and Vice Chair



Chair: Cllr Stuart Haskins

Cllr Stuart Haskins is the Chair for the West Monkton Parish Council, in addition to being Chair of the Hestercombe LCN.

He is also on the board of the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC).

Vice Chair: Cllr Norman Cavill

Cllr Norman Cavill is the Somerset Councillor for Monkton and North Curry Electoral Division.

He sits on the Audit Committee at Somerset Council, the Planning Committee (West) and also on the Level and Moors LCN.



Introduction

The Hestercombe LCN of eight parishes on the southern side of the Quantock Hills consists of one town council, two larger semi-urban parishes and five smaller parishes. North Petherton Town Council, and the Creech St Micheal and West Monkton Parish Councils are the three larger parish areas in this LCN and have all seen a great deal of expansion in recent years. The remaining five parish areas are more rural. They have generally avoided development and so have retained their character.

When Hestercombe LCN first met the issue of flooding immediately came to the top of the agenda and we were able to share ideas, information and best practice. Prior to the establishment of a single, unitary authority (Somerset Council), there was no regular, joint forum for information-sharing between parish areas in this way.

As the LCN has matured, so has its purpose and direction with issues of common interest tabled and openly debated. There is already evidence of progress on how as an LCN group we can help each other within our parishes, and communities.

With the smaller rural parish councils having considerably smaller budgets, they sometimes are unable to see how they can fund work and projects in their areas. It is also obvious that not all LCN communities share the same needs and priorities. However, as Chair and Vice Chair we strongly believe that by sharing knowledge, experience and resources held by the larger parishes within our LCN, that we will all be collectively stronger in the future as a result, and so work together efficiently as one.

Across the LCN we have a diverse collection of businesses and potential partners. Thus far we have not fully tapped into this pool of resources but as we the LCN parishes, become better informed and confident in our abilities, we're sure this will happen.

Clearly identifying the common needs of the LCN communities and of our partners will be the foundation for our future development and strength. Looking ahead to the next few years it will be interesting to see our achievements pan out, in particular in the delivery of the two schemes we are working on at the moment – they are the slowing of water run-off from the Quantock Hills and a completed cycle route along the A38 from Taunton to Bridgwater.

The help and direction given by Somerset Council's support team has undoubtedly been a great help to the Hestercombe LCN this year. It has been so useful to have their assistance and to share information with other parishes and LCNs. We would particularly like to thank the councillors and the other members of the public who have assisted our fledgling LCN. We look forward to working with you all in the year ahead, to achieve a continued level of good service and benefits for our wonderful communities.

Cllr Stuart Haskins
Chair, Hestercombe LCN

Cllr Norman Cavill
Vice Chair, Hestercombe LCN

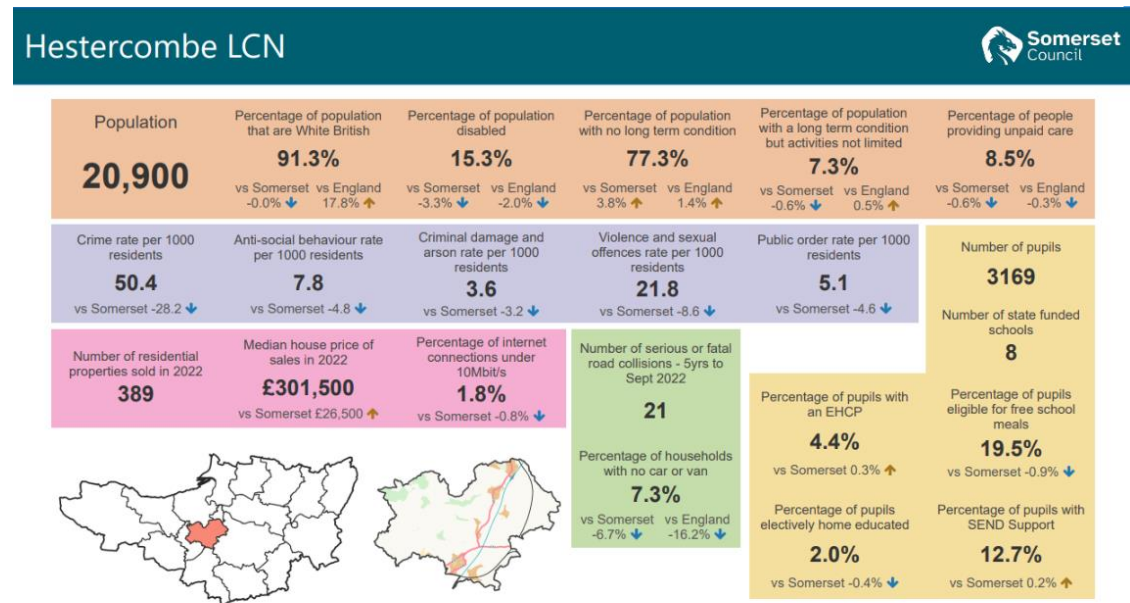
Priorities and Ambitions

Data

Somerset Council's Business Intelligence Team produced bespoke, detailed data for the Hestercombe LCN area.

You'll note it gives fascinating information and insights on population, residential properties, and policing.

Also featured are the number of pupils in education, and those with educational needs.

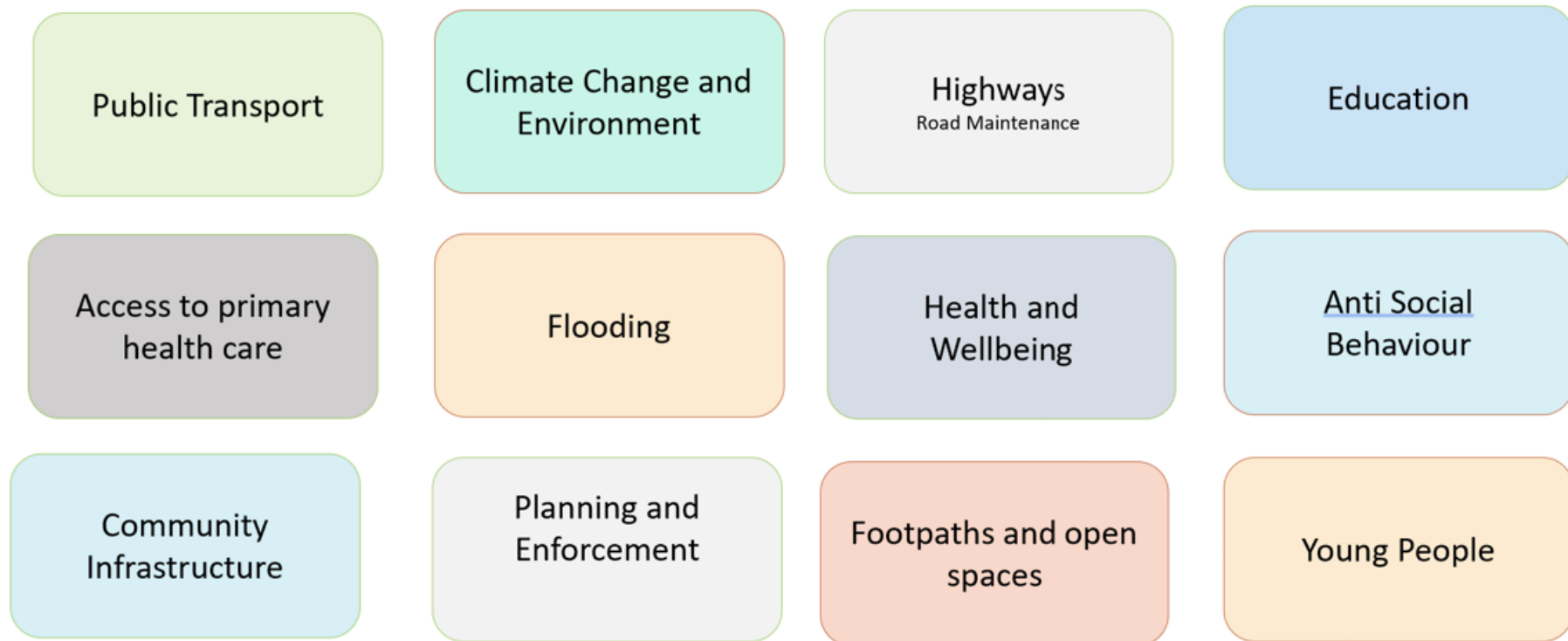


See Appendix B for larger image

Priorities and Ambitions

At the beginning of the of Hestercombe LCN year we gathered together to collectively discuss and identify what themes were important for our towns and parishes to tackle.

A set of priorities and ambitions were drawn up. The table (below) identifies these original themes, which became the focus for discussion throughout the first 12 months.



Priorities and Ambitions

Year One – A summary

During our main LCN meetings we further explored the emerging priorities with regard to:

- Flooding*
- Children and Young People
- Highways
- Health and Wellbeing

As a result of these focused meetings, Hestercombe LCN has set up two working groups: Children and Young People Working Group and a Highways Working Group.

*Local to Hestercombe LCN is the action group the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). At the time of the October LCN meeting, flooding was a high concern, and it was agreed to have a representative attend FWAG to feedback on flooding discussions and to also raise concerns from members of the LCN.

Children and Young People Working Group

The Children and Young People Working Group have been liaising with the Connect Somerset Champion to map local provisions to ascertain the breadth of services available to young people within this LCN area.

Most groups are located in West Monkton, Creech St Michael and North Petherton. These groups are largely being supported by Somerset Youth Work alliance to help increase the youth working (training) that can be made available. This working group aims to support the groups already in existence by updating and sharing a list of these provisions to the residents in the LCN. Somerset Youth Work Alliance are planning to launch a website hosting a live map of provisions that this will feed into.

Next steps will be to better understand the needs and wants of children and young people, to help encourage services into the area to match this. A particular focus will be on those young people living in the more rural parts of the area.

Priorities and Ambitions

Highways Working Group

Hestercombe LCN have had a preliminary meeting with Highways colleagues at Somerset Council to begin introductions to both the team and the Parish Council representatives.

Adopting a similar program to neighbouring LCN areas, this group will be working alongside Highways teams to highlight high priority issues as well as be a conduit for information on works that are to be carried out.

The Highways team will be available to contact via a directory and will be able to give an indication of when particular maintenance jobs are to be actioned – and will seek to get feedback from local representatives on the effect this is likely to have. This will also include an up to date report of planned work, made available for each highways meeting. In addition to this, a pricelist of works that can be purchased, will be made available this summer.

Emergency Planning

Hestercombe LCN hosted an emergency planning workshop and would like to expand on this in Year Two, with plans to look at personal emergency planning. The aim of future activity will be to encourage residents to have an action plan of how to stay safe in an emergency as well as to make sure they have the necessary provision in stock, should a personal emergency occur.

Financial Emergency impacts

The Financial Emergency declared by Somerset Council was announced at a very early stage of the LCN's development. The LCN provided an effective space for the Towns and Parishes to hear more about the actions proposed to mitigate the financial impacts and to discuss local solutions. However, these discussions also impacted the agreed schedule of meetings and their topics, resulting in less progress than anticipated in the discovery phase of priority-setting for the LCN.

Reflections

In the first year of the Hestercombe LCN, it has been heartwarming to witness how we have brought together multiple stakeholders that are integral to their communities.

These much-valued partners and stakeholders have brought with them a wealth of knowledge and experience, which has been helpful and heavily drawn-upon when discussing issues prevalent to the residents within this LCN area.

The collaborative approach of this LCN has paved the way for some useful and active working groups to be established. These working groups were able to dedicate time on important local issues and to prioritise actions.

We are confident this good work will continue as we move into Year Two.

Emmaline Kay

LCN Link Officer – Hestercombe

Contacts

Email: hestercombelcn@somerset.gov.uk

Website: www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/

South East Somerset LCN: www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/hestercombe/

Appendices

Appendix A – Core Membership

Parishes

Broomfield

Cheddon Fitzpaine

Creech St Michael

Durstun

Kingston St Mary

North Petherton

Thurloxton

West Monkton

Electoral Divisions

Monkton & North Curry

North Petherton

Rowbarton & Staplegrove

Taunton North

Organisations

Avon and Somerset Police

Spark Somerset

NHS

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

Education

Society Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

Somerset Association of Local Councils
(SALC)

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership
(SASP)

Community Council for Somerset
(Village Agents)

Citizens Advice

Department of Work and Pensions

Somerset Rivers Authority

Somerset Local Nature Partnership

Appendix A - continued

Other Partners and Stakeholders

Somerset Foundation Trust

North Petherton Rugby Club

Health watch

MIND

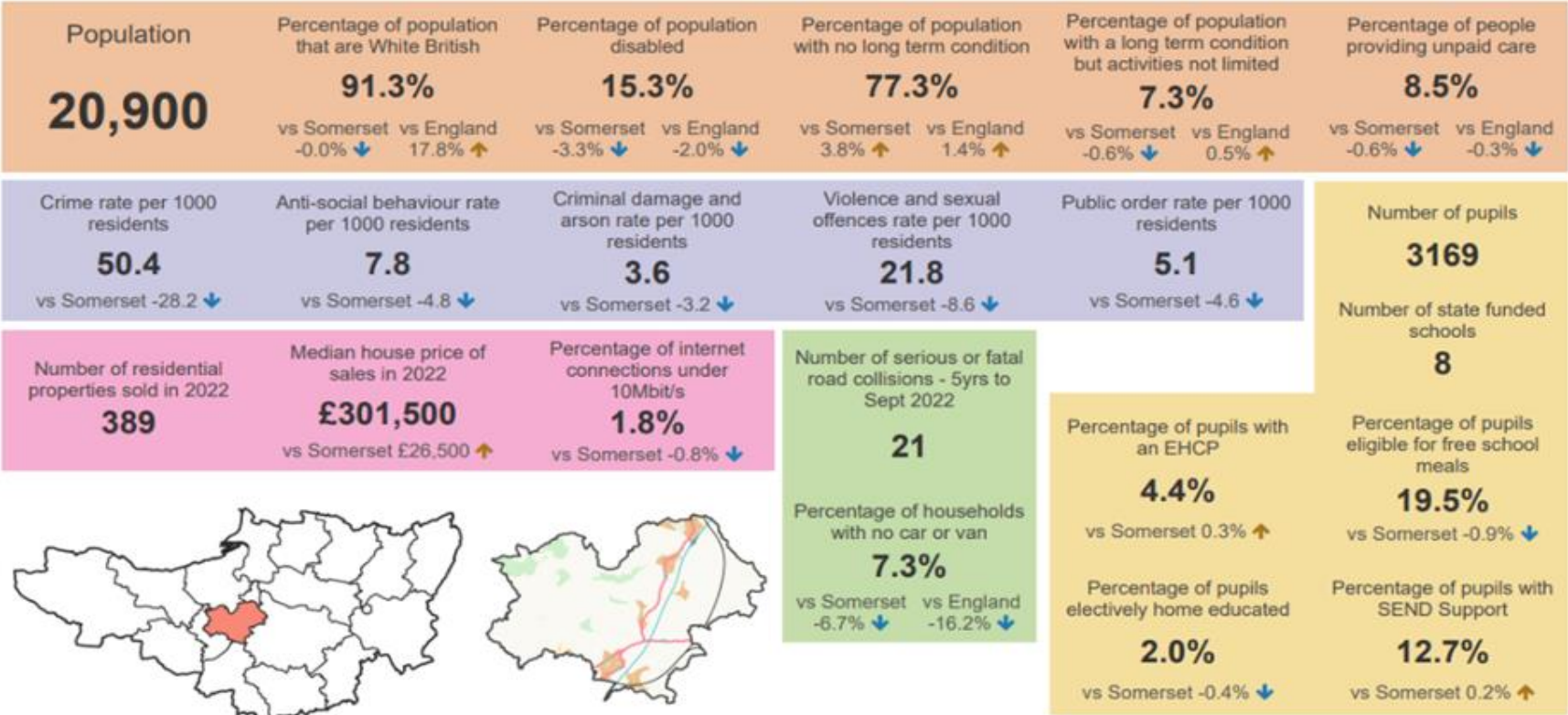
Kingston St Mary parochial church council

Well Be Link (adult mental health)

First Aid for Mental Health Instructor

Appendix B – Data

Hestercombe LCN

Appendix C – Meeting dates, talking points, plus links to the minutes

To browse meeting minutes visit: <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=894>

June 2023 - [Minutes Template \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Determining of priority issues for Hestercombe LCN

October 2023 - [Minutes Template \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Topic areas selected: Climate and Environment, Flooding and Young People

December 2023 - [Minutes Template \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Somerset Council Financial emergency and updates from FWAG

February 2024 - [Minutes Template \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Highway matters and update from Youth Provision working group

April 2024 - [Minutes Template \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Active travel presentation and update on peat trials