



Local Community Network

Vale of Frome LCN

Wednesday 29th April 2026, 7.00pm

Palairret Hall, Norton St Philip

Actions and Notes

1. Welcome to Norton St Philip and apologies

Barbie and Katrina from Norton St Phillip Parish Council outlined ongoing planning challenges, including repeated late document submissions by a developer and concerns about the management of the new local plan, with input from Ian and other participants regarding the impact on traffic and housing supply.

Barbie described how a developer, repeatedly submitted documents after the official deadline for a planning application, resulting in copious paperwork. The Parish Council believes this practice is illegitimate and that Somerset Council should enforce deadlines more strictly.

The Parish Council expressed concerns about the top-down management of the new local plan and the call for sites, referencing past dissatisfaction with site allocation and legal action taken against Mendip Council. They have commissioned Context Planning to independently evaluate sites and launched a survey for residents to ensure their voices are heard.

Ian explained that developers often reapply with new applications after rejections, exploiting loopholes such as reduced scrutiny for developments under ten houses. He noted that objections from previous applications do not carry forward, requiring residents to resubmit concerns each time.

Ian highlighted the impact of new housing developments on local traffic, particularly along the A366, and commended recent engagement from Highways, specifically Sara Davis, in addressing these issues.

2. Somerset Rivers Authority, Parish Preparedness Update

Paul Elliston, Somerset Rivers Authority, presented the results of the Parish Preparedness Survey, discussed community resilience, and outlined available grants and workshops, with participants raising questions about emergency planning, local response, and funding opportunities.

Paul summarised the survey findings, noting that parishes reported strong community spirit and communication but felt less prepared in terms of plans, equipment, and training. Top hazards identified included strong winds, power outages, road issues, flooding, and cold weather.

An action was taken to redistribute the parish preparedness survey.

Paul explained the importance of having live emergency plans, regular testing, and community contacts. He offered workshops to help parishes develop and test their plans, including scenario exercises and guidance on household-level preparedness.

An action was taken to arrange an LCN wide workshop including the SRA and other partners.

Paul described available grants, such as the Community Flood Action Fund (up to £20,000) and Somerset Prepared grants (up to £5,000), which support local actions to reduce flood risk and implement emergency plans. He clarified the competitive nature of the process and the priorities for funding.

Paul emphasised the need for parishes to map their watercourses, clarify responsibilities, and ensure maintenance is carried out, especially given increased rainfall and climate change. He discussed the role of riparian owners and the importance of collaboration with agencies and landowners.

Participants discussed the need to both mitigate and adapt to climate change, with Paul referencing resources such as Flood Mary and stressing the importance of working with nature. The group also considered advocacy strategies and succession planning for community groups.

3. Winter Gritting

Councillor Adam Boyden brought Winter Gritting forward as an item.

Adam discussed ongoing difficulties with Highways, including statutory limitations, gritting criteria, and the challenges of securing updates and support, with suggestions for surveys and alternative arrangements raised by the group.

The LCN discussed the strict criteria for gritting routes, such as minimum pupil numbers for schools and settlement size, which often exclude smaller communities. Attempts to add routes or pay for additional services have been unsuccessful due to statutory limitations.

Suggestions included commissioning local farmers for gritting and snow ploughing, but insurance and statutory restrictions present obstacles. The group considered collecting data on incidents, such as school bus accidents, to strengthen their case

An action was taken to design and distribute a survey to all parishes to identify critical routes requiring gritting and collect supporting evidence such as school bus incidents. To be introduced at the next LCN

4. AOB/Dates for the diary

Due to time constraints, other items were not discussed.

James reminded members to use the Vale of Frome LCN email address for any Somerset Council issues and were informed that slides and notes from the meeting would be distributed.

The next meeting will be a Food Resilience Special in Frome Town Hall on Tuesday 16th June.