

Wells and Rural Local Community Network

Annual Report 2025/26



Wells and Rural LCN



Parishes	11
LCN Chair	Cllr Denise Denis (Wells City Council)
LCN Vice Chair	Cllr Ros Wyke (Somerset Councillor/Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council)
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Contents

Introduction.....	pg. 4
Chair's Reflections.....	pg. 5
Link Officer's Reflections.....	pg. 7
Highways Working Group.....	pg. 8
Active Travel Working Group.....	pg. 9
Police and Crime Commissioner.....	pg. 10
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.....	pg. 11
Connect Somerset.....	pg. 12
Adult Social Care.....	pg. 13
Main Meeting Attendance.....	pg. 14
Looking Ahead 2026-2027.....	pg. 15

Introduction

The Wells and Rural Local Community Network (LCN) encompass the city of Wells and a wider surrounding network of rural communities, covering a total of 11 parishes characterised by a mix of historic urban centre and dispersed villages set within an environmentally significant landscape. The area includes parts of the Mendip Hills National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), with its distinctive ridge and rural topography shaping both the identity of the area and the needs of its communities. This geography creates a diverse context in which Wells serves as a key service and population hub, while the surrounding parishes are more rural, with agricultural, environmental and connectivity considerations playing an important role. The LCN brings together Somerset Council, parish and town councils, statutory partners and residents to support partnership working and community-led approaches to improving outcomes for local people.

Within this context, the Wells and Rural LCN focuses on a set of locally agreed priorities that reflect both the opportunities and challenges across the area. Key themes for 2025–2026 include strengthening provision for young people, particularly in relation to mental health, resilience and access to youth services; improving active travel infrastructure to support safer and more accessible walking and cycling links between communities; and addressing highways and transport issues, including road safety, speeding and better communication around infrastructure projects. Additional areas of interest include flooding, community safety and health and wellbeing, reflecting the needs of both urban and rural populations. The LCN delivers this work through regular network meetings and dedicated working groups, particularly focused on highways and active travel, which provide forums for detailed discussion, collaboration and the application of local knowledge to inform decision-making. Overall, the Wells and Rural LCN represents a collaborative, place-based approach that recognises the varied needs of its communities and seeks to strengthen connections, engagement and outcomes across this diverse and largely rural part of Somerset.

Chair's Reflections



It has been a pleasure to Chair the Wells and Rural LCN this year. I would like to thank our Link Officer, Charlotte Griffin, for her excellent support in helping to shape agendas, coordinate speakers and identify suitable venues across Wells and the surrounding rural parishes. This support has been invaluable in my first year as Chair and has helped ensure that each of our full LCN meetings has focused on issues that are relevant and meaningful to our local communities.

At our first meeting, the LCN agreed a set of priorities for 2025–2026 that reflected the shared concerns and ambitions of Wells City Council, rural parish councils, Somerset Councillors and local partners. Over the course of the year, good progress has been made in taking forward many of these themes through full LCN meetings, working group discussions and ongoing partnership conversations.

LCN priorities for 2025–2026

- Youth provision and outreach (e.g., mobile youth services, youth-led initiatives).
 - Speeding and traffic enforcement.
 - Flood prevention and inter-parish collaboration.
- Improved communication and networking between parishes.
 - Access to funding and budget transparency.
 - Better stakeholder engagement (e.g., police, health, SRA).

Progress and outcomes

1. A seed funding bid achieved for youth provision in the Parishes- and a report sent to all the parishes in the LCN with a follow up meeting for Stakeholders with Jessica Lewin, Street in September. The offer of SALC funding for this Summer's Youth activities in the rural parishes has been explored and Wells Council has offered to facilitate.
2. Speeding and Traffic Enforcement was debated - we were very fortunate to have Clare Moody, Police Crimes Commissioner, plus 3 officers including (Simon Lancey, Road traffic senior officer) to answer questions at our December meeting and this was followed by further questions at the Highways Sub group meetings, to the Police and Highways, from the rural parishes in particular, for more speed reduction measures. We were assured at both meetings that the methods surveillance of traffic disorders were increased but not always visible to the public. Local issues to various parishes had some common themes- and the Crime Commissioner heard the concern that all the parishes were concerned that lack of visibility of police officers was more likely to lead to increased crime.
3. Flood Prevention and Inter-parish collaboration- Cllr Ros Wyke and I both attended a workshop set up by the Somerset Rivers Authority to look at Emergency Planning across the whole of Somerset- and how prepared are we in our parishes. This is clearly a greater issue for some than others, but even if we are not in a flood plain it became evident that surface water flooding, blocked gullies, severe rainfall in short periods can cause considerable disruption and the officers gave us guidance on how we can develop our planning. I would recommend that all parishes try to attend the next Somerset Parishes Conference to meet and engage with the SRA and Environment Agency.
4. Improved communication and networking- the venues have be rotated between, Godney, Binegar, Wells Golf Club and Coxley. Some have been better attended- others less so, but all have had a blended meeting option for online attendance. There have been opportunities for introductions for everyone to feel more included, but I regret the LCN meetings do not seem to be achieving the popularity it was hoped for. I understand that Somerset Council is reviewing the way forward for LCNs and we may find our attendance figures will be taken into account.

I hope that this will give the next Chair a good base to work from- My mantra always has been-together we are stronger. I look forward to this in 2026-27.

Best wishes, Denise Denis (Wells City Council/Chair of Wells and Rural LCN)

Link Officer's Reflections

Since taking on the Link Officer role, I have valued the opportunity to work with parish and town councils, Somerset Councillors, community partners, statutory agencies and local stakeholders across an area that brings together the Wells and Rural LCN.

Over the past year, the LCN has provided an important forum for discussion, information sharing and partnership working. Main meetings have enabled local representatives and partners to explore shared priorities including youth provision, highways and traffic concerns, flooding and emergency planning, community safety, health and wellbeing, and active travel.

Alongside the formal main meetings, much of my role has focused on the important work that takes place between meetings. This has included building relationships with parish councils, Somerset Council colleagues, statutory partners and voluntary and community organisations, as well as creating links between partners so that local issues can be better understood and responded to collectively. I have also supported communities and partners during periods of flooding, helping to share information, strengthen communication routes and connect local representatives with relevant services and support. In addition, I have attended Health Determinants Research Collaboration training, which has helped to strengthen my understanding of how evidence, data and wider determinants of health can inform place-based working and support more preventative approaches across the LCN.

Looking ahead to 2026–2027, the Wells and Rural LCN has a strong base to build on. The priorities identified this year show the value of continuing to focus on practical, place-based issues that matter to local communities, while also strengthening the links between local insight and wider Somerset Council and partner activity. As the wider Community Working Review progresses, there will be an important opportunity to reflect on what has worked well and how LCNs can continue to support meaningful engagement and partnership working in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to and supported the Wells and Rural LCN this year. In particular, thank you to Cllr Denise Denis for Chairing the LCN, Cllr Ros Wyke for supporting as Vice Chair, and to all parish representatives, councillors, officers and partners who have given their time, knowledge and commitment to the network.

Charlotte Griffin

LCN Link Officer

Highways Working Group

Highways and road safety were identified as key priorities for the Wells and Rural LCN during 2025–2026, with particular emphasis on speeding, traffic enforcement, road closures and diversions, drainage, surface water, maintenance concerns and the need for clearer communication around reporting routes and decision-making. The working group has helped to bring these issues together thematically, supporting a more coordinated approach to understanding common challenges across the area.

Topics covered have included:

- Speeding and traffic enforcement
- Road safety and evidence-led reporting
- Road closures, diversions and traffic management
- Drainage, surface water and flooding impacts on the highway network
- Use of the “Report It” system and highways reporting routes
- Localised parish highways concerns and the role of site-specific knowledge
- Communication between parishes, Somerset Council Highways and partner agencies



A word cloud of terms related to highways and road safety. The words are in various shades of blue and are arranged in a cluster. The most prominent word is 'Highways' in the center. Other words include 'Speeding', 'Safety', 'Potholes', 'Traffic Lights', 'Parking', 'Gullies', 'Enhanced Highways Maintenance', 'Crossing', 'Avon and Somerset Police', 'Evidence', 'Data', 'Maintenance', 'Lining', 'Resurfacing', 'Signs', 'Surface Dressing', and 'Crossing'.

Active Travel Working Group

Active travel was identified as one of the LCN's priorities for 2025–2026, reflecting the importance of safer, more accessible and better-connected routes for residents, visitors and communities across the area. The group has provided a useful space for local knowledge to be shared, helping to identify barriers that may prevent people from walking, cycling or wheeling safely and confidently.

Topics covered have included:

- Safer walking, cycling and wheeling routes across Wells and surrounding rural parishes
- Continuing engagement with Somerset Council officers and relevant partners
- Accessibility for disabled users, older residents, families and people using mobility scooters or wheelchairs
- Dropped kerbs and local access improvements
- Links between active travel, health and wellbeing, and reducing reliance on car travel
- Public transport connections and how active travel can support wider transport access
- The emerging Somerset Local Plan and Transport Plan
- Opportunities to influence future infrastructure, planning and funding decisions
- The importance of local knowledge from parish councils, residents and community partners
- Cross-boundary working where routes connect with other LCN areas
- The Strawberry Line and opportunities for onward links

Police and Crime Commissioner

In January 2026, the Wells and Rural LCN welcomed the Police and Crime Commissioner, Clare Moody, alongside police and road safety colleagues to provide an overview of current policing priorities and to hear directly from local communities about the issues affecting rural areas.

The session helped strengthen links between the LCN, neighbourhood policing teams, Somerset Council officers and parish representatives, with discussion focused on neighbourhood policing, road safety, rural crime, anti-social behaviour, victim support and public confidence in policing. Attendees raised practical concerns including speeding, drug driving, road closures following collisions, unlicensed music events, local police visibility and routes for reporting intelligence.

The talk provided a useful opportunity for communities to better understand how enforcement and prevention activity is being prioritised, including the role of Community Speed Watch data, dashcam submissions and local engagement with neighbourhood teams. Overall, the session supported the LCN's role in bringing partners together, improving communication between communities and statutory services, and identifying shared priorities for safer, more resilient rural communities.



Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service joined the Wells and Rural LCN meeting in April 2026 to talk about community safety, prevention and local resilience. The session was a useful chance to hear more about the support available for residents, parish councils and local partners, including practical fire safety advice, prevention messages and how to identify people who may need extra support or signposting.

It also helped strengthen links between the LCN and emergency service partners. The discussion highlighted how parish councils, local groups and community representatives can help share important safety messages across Wells and the surrounding rural communities. This linked well with wider LCN priorities around resilience, prevention, flooding, emergency planning and partnership working.



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Connect Somerset

Connect Somerset was invited to speak to the Wells and Rural LCN as part of the wider discussion about how we can better support children, young people and families locally. Previous conversations had highlighted the need to improve early help, make people more aware of the support already available, and help communities connect with services before problems become more serious. The session helped members understand how Connect Somerset brings different services and partners together, with a focus on earlier support and making it easier for families and professionals to find the right advice and guidance.

The presentation also fitted well with the role of the LCN in bringing people together. It helped strengthen links between parish and city councils, Somerset Council, health partners, schools, voluntary organisations and local community groups. For Wells and the surrounding rural parishes, this was especially relevant, as families can sometimes face extra challenges because of distance, transport and access to services. The discussion helped members think about how local knowledge, existing relationships and community networks can support a more joined-up approach to helping families earlier.



Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care in Somerset plays an important role in helping adults with a wide range of needs — including older people, people living with disabilities, mental health conditions and long-term illness — to live safely, independently and well within their communities.

For Wells and Rural LCN, this is particularly relevant because the area includes both Wells as a key service hub and a number of smaller rural parishes where residents may face additional challenges linked to transport, isolation, access to services and awareness of available support.

Adult Social Care colleagues attended a Wells and Rural LCN meeting to provide an overview of how the service is structured in Somerset and to explain the different teams, pathways and points of contact available. This helped members build a clearer understanding of how residents can access support, what services may be available, and how local networks can help identify and connect people who may need advice or assistance.

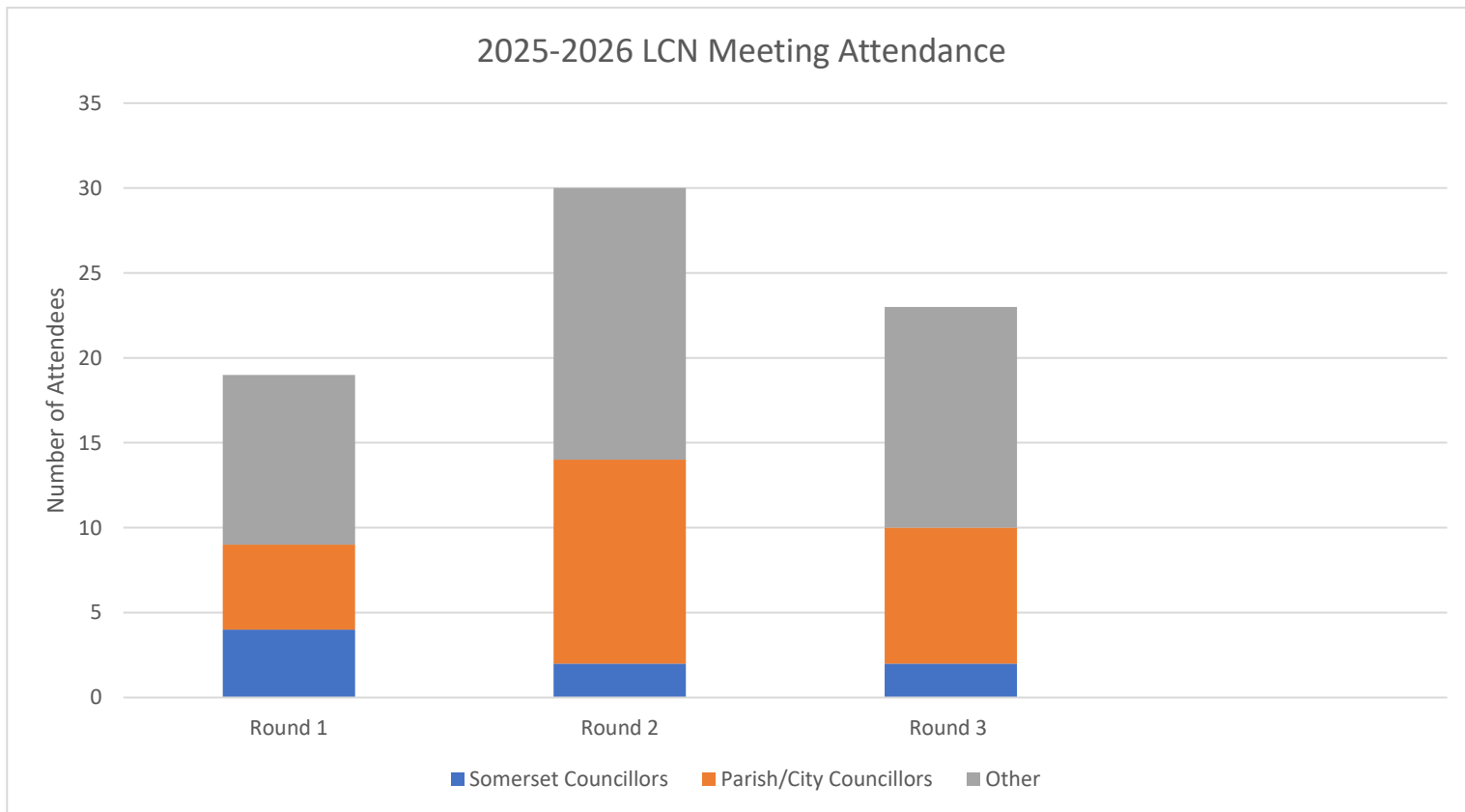
Areas covered included:

- Main Adult Social Care services available
- Mental health and social work teams
- Safeguarding
- Transitions for adults with learning disabilities
- Hospital interface teams
- Intermediate care pathways
- Somerset Independent Living Centres (SILC)
- Signposting routes and local contact points



Main Meeting Attendance

All previous and upcoming agendas and notes can be found through this link: [Local Community Network Meetings](#)



Looking Ahead 2026-2027

Looking ahead to 2026–2027, the Wells and Rural LCN will continue to build on the strong foundations established during the past year. The priorities identified by local representatives remain highly relevant, particularly around youth provision, highways and road safety, flooding and emergency planning, active travel, community safety, health and wellbeing, and improving communication between parishes, partners and Somerset Council. The LCN will aim to maintain its role as a practical forum for sharing local knowledge, identifying common issues and strengthening partnership working across Wells and the surrounding rural communities.

A key focus for the year ahead will be ensuring that discussions lead to clear outcomes, with continued emphasis on working groups and partner engagement where these can add value. This includes supporting further conversations around rural youth outreach, improving understanding of highways reporting routes and evidence-led road safety concerns, strengthening local resilience in relation to flooding and emergency planning, and exploring opportunities to improve walking, cycling, wheeling and wider transport connectivity. There will also be opportunities to continue linking local priorities with wider Somerset Council strategies, including emerging work around transport, planning, prevention and community wellbeing.

The outcome of Somerset Council's Community Working Review will also help shape the future direction of LCNs. For Wells and Rural, this provides an important opportunity to reflect on what has worked well, address challenges around engagement and attendance, and ensure that future arrangements continue to support meaningful local involvement. By keeping the focus on practical action, strong relationships and shared local priorities, the Wells and Rural LCN can continue to play an important role in connecting communities, partners and services across this diverse area.