

## Local Community Network Meeting Notes

**Meeting Title:** Local Community Network – Minehead & Watchet

**Date:** Thursday 10 April, 2025

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Location:** Minehead Community Centre and Online via Microsoft Teams

**Chaired by:** Cllr Mandy Chilcott (Somerset Council)

### LCN Core Membership Attendance:

**Name:**

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Tony Brooks  
Cllr Craig Palmer  
Cllr Paul Appleton  
Cllr Jan Swan  
Cllr John Irvén  
Cllr Mark Philipson  
Ray Tew  
Cllr John Richards

**Representing**

Carhampton PC  
Crowcombe PC  
Minehead Town Council  
Monksilver PC  
Sampford Brett PC  
Watchet Town Council  
West Quantoxhead PC  
Minehead Coastal Development Trust  
WACET

### Virtual Attendees:

**Name:**

Cllr Hugh Davies  
Cllr Geoff Williams  
Michelle Francis (Clerk)  
Amanda Shirani  
Alice Bagg  
Wayne Stokes

**Representing:**

Somerset Council  
Old Cleeve PC  
Williton PC  
Magna Housing Association  
Magna Housing Association  
CCS Village Agent

### Other attendees

**Name:**

PCSO Supervisor Katherine Williams  
Acting Sgt Naomi Baker  
Ben Parker (Clerk)

**Representing:**

Avon & Somerset Police  
Avon & Somerset Police  
Minehead Town Council

Cllr Mimi Palmer  
Cllr Sue Smith  
Cllr Wendy Philipson

Minehead Town Council  
Carhampton PC  
West Quantoxhead resident

## **Officer Attendance:**

Sam Murrell (LCN Link Officer), Kate Hellard (Localities Development Manager), Callum Davey (ICT Support) Anne Shilton – Virtual (LCN Link Officer)

## **Summary of discussion:**

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### **1. Introductions and apologies**

The Chair, Cllr Mandy Chilcott thanked Ben Parker (clerk) and Minehead Town Council for providing the meeting space on short notice due to the unavailability of West Somerset House.

The Chair mentioned the ongoing review of LCNs and expressed satisfaction with the engagement in West Somerset, highlighting the support from towns, parishes, residents, third sector, and police.

**Introductions:** Kate Hellard (SC LCN Development and Engagement Manager) who oversees all LCNs, including parish development, community development, and assets of community value.

Alice Bagg and Amanda Shirani (Magna Housing) – online

Acting Sgt Naomi Baker and PCSO Supervisor Katherine Williams (Avon and Somerset Police)

**Apologies:** SC Andy Sully and Andy Hadley, Loretta Whetlor (SALC) and Shona Stone (LiveWest)

### **2. Avon and Somerset Police Update**

Acting Sgt Naomi Baker was introduced and welcomed, and then a few updates from the Neighbourhood Policing Team were provided.

The Minehead Team have now settled into the new station on Stephenson Road. This is used as the Neighbourhood Policing Base and Response Officers based across the Sector also frequently make use of the new space. The Enquiry Office is open Monday – Friday 10-18 and closed for lunch between 1330hrs and 1415hrs. To confirm there are Response Officers covering the West Somerset area 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The PCSO's are continuing to deliver Mini Police sessions to our Primary School children. (Old Cleeve, Minehead First and St Dubricius at Porlock have all benefitted

from the scheme this term). Mini Police consists of 9 sessions split into various activities, including running a session for the students to obtain the Duke of Cornwall award. Another session is the social action plan where pupils must come up with an activity that helps the community – for Old Cleeve this time it is litter picking at the local park.

The Neighbourhood team are still conducting weekly beat surgeries at the West Somerset College and are working closely with them to introduce some further anti-violence inputs to individuals of concern. The PCSO's are regularly attending youth clubs across the area to provide education to the children and ensure that children that are not currently attending school but are attending the youth clubs – are being safeguarded. The team have carried out targeted hi-vis patrols around the school, particularly in the mornings and have utilised Special Constabulary to support them with this. They have also carried out work in our middle schools, and Foxes Academy have had numerous inputs around keeping safe.

The team are still hosting several beat surgeries across the sector – any events are advertised on the ASP webpages along with their priorities which are updated fortnightly depending on demand, reported crime and intelligence. The team currently host frequent surgeries in Porlock, Minehead, Watchet and Williton. The Police Post in Watchet has re-opened. The team have used this space to complete a number of talks regarding fraud and how to keep yourself safe from scams.

The local team have worked closely with Ben Parker (clerk) from Minehead Town Council, who has successfully obtained the funds and arranged installation of 2 further bleed kits within the town – these are situated outside the Hairy Dog and Channel Adventure. Ben has been hugely helpful and supportive in helping the police tackle some of the ASB hotspots by arranging for his team to secure abandoned buildings and remove abandoned tents that could attract further ASB. The communication stream with Ben and the Town Council is invaluable - so thank you to them.

One of the most prolific local shop lifters was given a community protection notice to deter his offending. He has since moved out of the area and so there has been a huge decline in local shop theft. Local intelligence from a member of the public, informed the police that two individuals were travelling to Butlins to sell drugs at the venue. The neighborhood team worked with police drug and traffic teams to intercept the individuals on their way to Butlins and both were arrested for various drug supply offences and a large quantity of drugs were seized.

Two burglaries recently took place (one in a commercial premises and the other in a dwelling) over the time frame of two weeks. The suspect was located and arrested quickly due to local knowledge of officers. The suspect was remanded in custody and appeared in court. The court released the male with strict bail conditions and a tag to prevent reoffending. If you are concerned about the safety of your property, please

go to the local station and officers can give crime prevention advice and information on how to keep your property safe and secure.

Local officers have been given additional training in identifying risky individuals during the night time economy. This ties in with the local priority of reducing violence against women and girls. The police continue to attend local Pubwatch monthly meetings, keeping informed on updates from our licensed premises. The team have been carrying out licensing checks and working with their licensing officer to ensure all premises are adhering to their conditions, making the night time economy an overall safer space for all to enjoy.

The team continue to have multi-agency meetings to ensure that they are up to date with community concerns and by having these meetings can provide long-term solutions to issues within our area. Whilst conducting regular patrols within the town, the police can identify rough sleepers within the area, and work with other agencies to provide the necessary support.

Following the update, the officers were thanked for their report and allowed to leave the meeting.

### 3. Magna Housing Presentation:

Presented by Alice Bagg and Amanda Shirani.

The slides are attached to these minutes.

Alice Bagg and Amanda Shirani from Magna Housing presented an overview of their regional home services teams, improvements in accessibility, and efforts to address damp and mold issues. They also discussed their community improvement fund and the importance of neighborhood visits.

- **Regional Home Services Teams:** Magna Housing has restructured into regional home services teams, including response repairs operatives, housing officers, estate services teams, and surveyors, to provide a more personalised service.
- **Improvements in Accessibility:** Magna Housing has improved accessibility by increasing the number of housing officers and ensuring they spend at least 70% of their time in the community.
- **Damp and Mould Issues:** Magna Housing is preparing for new legislation on damp and mould, investing in resources and training to address these issues more effectively.
- **Community Improvement Fund:** Magna Housing has a community improvement fund that residents can apply for, with the aim of supporting local projects and initiatives.
- **Neighbourhood Visits:** Magna Housing is reintroducing neighborhood visits, focusing on areas that need the most attention and involving local representatives in these visits.

**Questions for Magna Housing:** Participants raised questions about Magna Housing's phone line improvements, website responsiveness, and specific issues in Carhampton. Alice and Amanda addressed these concerns and provided updates on ongoing efforts.

- **Phone Line Improvements:** Alice acknowledged the long wait times on phone lines and explained that the focus is on reducing repeat contact by improving services and ensuring repairs are completed promptly.
- **Website Responsiveness:** Cllr Sue Smith from Carhampton mentioned slow responses from the website. Alice and Amanda acknowledged the issue and emphasised ongoing efforts to improve accessibility and responsiveness.
- **Specific Issues in Carhampton:** Cllr Sue Smith raised specific issues in Carhampton, including a lamp post replacement and a drainage ditch fence. Amanda noted these issues and committed to addressing them.
- **Community Engagement:** Magna Housing emphasized the importance of community engagement and invited local representatives to join neighborhood visits to understand and address local issues better.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Community Visits:** Distribute the schedule of Magna's community visits to towns and parishes once the dates are confirmed. (Amanda)
- **Phone Line Improvement:** Review and address the issue of long wait times on Magna's phone lines to improve customer service. (Alice)
- **Outstanding Repairs:** Follow up on the replacement of lamppost #1 in Hill Lane, Carhampton, and the repair of the drainage ditch fence at the junior playing field. (Amanda)
- **Boundary Fence Repair:** Investigate and repair the fallen boundary fence at 15 Meadowside, Carhampton. (Amanda)
- **Key Contacts List:** Provide key contact details for Magna representatives to the LCN for distribution to local councils. (Alice, Amanda)
- **Annual Report Presentation:** Commit to presenting Magna's annual report at the LCN meeting annually. (Alice, Amanda)

#### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting

These were agreed by those present as a true record of the meeting.

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

- **Highways Restructuring:** Despite initial concerns, the reductions in the highway service were not as severe as first feared, although key personnel have since left or taken redundancy. (Andrew Turner, David Peake and Kevin Bridgwater have now departed Somerset Council). The remaining team is expected to continue supporting the highways sub-groups and other initiatives. Sam Murrell, the LCN

Link Officer will be supporting highways groups in other LCN areas, in order to share best practice

- **SALC Funding:** The SALC fund has been temporarily paused to assess what funding is left, and how the grant can be structured in the final year. All grant funds must be allocated and spent by April 1, 2026.
  - Minehead Town Council partnered with Minehead Eye and the West Somerset Primary Care Network to apply for the SALC health and well-being grant and was awarded the maximum £35K.
  - The funding is intended to establish or continue a full-time young people's health coach role, enhancing the youth worker position at Minehead Eye.
  - The health coach will provide early-stage intervention for children in the Minehead and West Somerset area, offering health and well-being support that may not be available through their GP.
  - The project aims to provide early-stage intervention and support for youngsters in the area, with the potential to expand and introduce it across the wider LCN area in future meetings.

This collaborative effort is expected to benefit the local youth by providing accessible health and well-being services.

## 6. Highways Working Group Update

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker (BMW) provided an update on the B3191 road closure, rights of way issues, active travel routes, and road safety and signage issues. She mentioned the upcoming meeting on April 24th to discuss alternative routes for the B3191.

- **B3191 Road Closure:** BMW discussed the ongoing issues with the B3191 road closure, including the legality of the closure and the need for alternative route. The B3191 road closure from Carhampton to Watchet has been a significant concern due to subsidence on the cliff.
  - Initially, the road was closed under a section 14(1) for 18 months, but a press release later indicated it would be closed for five years, which was not legally supported.
  - BMW highlighted that the closure is currently not legal, and Somerset Council is working on finding an alternative solution.
  - A meeting is scheduled for April 24th with the affected parishes (Old Cleeve, Carhampton, and Watchet) to discuss potential solutions and provide more clarity on the situation.

- The highway sub-group has offered to work with Somerset Council to find an alternative route and address the subsidence issue. The discussion emphasized the need for collaboration and finding a legal and practical solution to the road closure.
- **Rights of Way Issues:** BMW mentioned concerns about the Regulation Committee's handling of modification orders for rights of way, which are now going through the Strategic Planning Committee.
- **Active Travel Routes:** BMW highlighted the need for updates on the second phase of the active travel route between Minehead and Dunster, which has faced funding issues.

**.Ideas and themes for future meetings:-**

**Coastal Protection:** John Buttivant from the Environment Agency will be attending the next meeting of the LCN, which will be the AGM on the 16 July 2025.

The coastal management work with the Environment Agency was discussed in the context of the upcoming presentation by John Buttivant, the coastal engineer for the Environment Agency. John will be addressing the coastal protection and management efforts along the West Somerset coastline. This presentation is expected to provide valuable insights into the current state of coastal management, the challenges faced, and the strategies being implemented to protect the coastline.

The meeting emphasized the importance of having unitary officers present to ensure comprehensive discussions and coordination.

Other potential topics for future meetings, were discussed as follows:-

- **Community Hospitals:** Updates from community hospitals, such as Williton and Minehead, to understand the services provided, including new initiatives like chemotherapy at Williton.
- **Youth and Early Years Provision:** Youth and early years provision, including organisations like Home Start that cover the whole of West Somerset.
- **Preparedness and Community Resilience:** Mark Phillips emphasised the need for preparedness for power outages, including the use of generators in village halls and the importance of community support during emergencies. Bolstering community resilience.
- **West Somerset Advice Bureau:** Updates from the West Somerset Advice Bureau, detailing their work and support for the community.

- 7. The next meeting of the Minehead & Watchet LCN will be the AGM on Wednesday 16 July 2025 (AGM). Venue to be confirmed.**
  
- 8. The next Highway Subgroup meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 June 2025. Venue to be confirmed.**  
To commence at 10am and be held in a suitable space. (Most likely Beckett House, Enterprise Centre, Williton)