

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Minehead and Watchet

Date: Wednesday, 17 July 2024

Time: 6.31 pm - 8.30 pm

Location: West Somerset House Council Chamber

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	Somerset Council
Cllr Andy Hadley	Somerset Council
Cllr Marcus Kravis	Somerset Council
Cllr Christine Lawrence	Somerset Council
Cllr Rosemary Woods	Somerset Council
Cllr Mike Rawle	Bicknoller PC
Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker	Carhampton PC
Cllr Tony Brooks	Crowcombe PC
Cllr Craig Palmer	Minehead TC
Cllr Geoff Williams	Old Cleeve PC
Cllr Tracey Skinner	Sampford Brett PC
Cllr John Irvén	Watchet TC
Cllr Maggie Forkes	West Bagborough PC
Cllr Mark Philipson	West Quantoxhead PC
Sgt Hayden Smith	Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)
Cllr Loretta Whetlor	SALC

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Sam Murrell (LCN Link Officer)	Somerset Council
Emma Plummer (Interim LCN Lead Officer)	Somerset Council
Tom Parkinson (ICT Specialist)	Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:

Cllr Sue Smith
Cllr Chris Ellis
Julian Russell
Fodo Higginson
Wendy Philipson
Charlotte Weer
Michelle Francis (clerk)
Kevin Francis

Representing

Carhampton PC
Carhampton PC
Sampford Brett PC
SALC (Health & Wellbeing)
West Quantoxhead PC
West Bagborough PC
Williton PC
Williton & District Business Assoc.

Virtual attendees:

Name:

Ellie Bishop
Kate Hellard
Zara Aitken
Paul Matcham

Representing

CCS (Village Agent)
Somerset Council
MCDT
Minehead Eye / Connect Somerset

Apologies:

Cllrs Hugh Davies & Andy Sully (Somerset Council), Jan Swan (Sampford Brett PC), John Richards (WACET), Ray Tew (MCDT), Cllr Peter Payne (Williton PC) Robin Wichard (Nettlecombe PC), John Passingham (Combe Florey PC) Martin Stevens (WCCT), PCSO Supervisor Katherine Williams (ASP), Christine Boland & Annie Cole (Magna Housing Assoc).

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Action by: item:

Item 46: Elect the Chair for the Local Community Network

SC Mandy Chilcott, nominated by SC Andy Hadley and seconded by SC Rosemary Woods was elected as the new chair of the LCN.

Item 47: Appoint the Vice- Chair of the Local Community Network

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker was re-elected as the vice chair of the LCN, continuing her role from the previous year, nominated by Loretta Whetlor (SALC) and seconded by Cllr Geoff Williams (Old Cleeve PC).

Item 48: **Consider the Yearly Report of the LCNs work in the last 12 months**

The outgoing Chair Cllr Andy Sully thanked the LCN and Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker for working hard to build collaborative relationships and coming together in the working groups.

[The presentation slides for the meeting are available to view on this link.](#)

The meeting reviewed the annual report of the LCN, which covered the achievements, challenges, and priorities of the network in the past 12 months.

- The meeting agreed to continue the highways and traffic working group, which had been successful in addressing local issues and concerns with SC highways officers.
- The meeting discussed the flooding and resilience workshop that was held in Minehead, and the opportunities for improving community preparedness and response to emergencies.

The report can be viewed here: [LCN Yearly Report 23_24 Minehead and Watchet LCN_JULY 24_ pdf FINAL.pdf \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Item 49: **Overview of Highlights from LCNS across Somerset**

An overview of the highlights and activities of the other LCNs in Somerset, and the potential for learning and collaboration more information can be found in the PP here. [PowerPoint Presentation \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Item 50: **Consider the priorities and areas of focus for the LCN for the next 12 months.**

Better Police Engagement

The meeting had a Q&A session with ASP Sergeant Hayden Smith, who answered questions about local policing, crime prevention, and community engagement in particular concerns about issues such as shoplifting, speeding, reporting and accessibility.

The meeting agreed to have a regular slot for the police at the beginning of each meeting, and to have a contact list of the local PCSOs and other relevant officers.

He suggested using the app What3Words to pinpoint locations in rural areas and gave his email address for further communication.

Hayden.Smith@avonandsomerset.police.uk

The members thanked him for his input and attendance.

Directory for local services: - website links

Somerset Council

Find your local councillor: [Your Councillors - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/councillors)

Avon and Somerset Police

Neighbourhood Beat Team : [Your area | Avon and Somerset Police](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area)

CCS (Community Council for Somerset

Village Agents: [Village Agents | Find an Agent \(somersetagents.org\)](https://www.somersetagents.org)

Parish Clerks

All town and parish clerks: [Parish councils contact details - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/parish-councils)

Children and Young People

The LCN members explored the theme of provision and support for children and young people in Minehead and Watchet, especially in relation to education, employment, health and wellbeing. They would like to hear more from Paul Matcham, Connect Somerset Champion at Minehead Eye in addition to Clare Pound (Homestart).

Health and Wellbeing

Raised as an important topic by the Chair, especially given the pressures on the local health services.

SALC H&WB funding – Fodo Higginson is overseeing and promoting this funding grant which is available to constituted bodies. It was requested that she provide a presentation at the next LCN meeting to talk about the fund and how it can be accessed.

Discussion about the range of partners to include and how to define an area of focus.

Agreed to consider a specific meeting with some preparatory work to understand the needs of residents in the area. Also to include, who should be invited to participate and what data is already available?

Housing

There was concern regarding the current housing situation in West Somerset, especially the Rainbow Way development and the high demand for affordable homes.

The Chair and Link Officer highlighted the successful open day that took place in September, where over 500 people attended to view the show house and learn more about the eligibility criteria and application process. However, the report also acknowledged the challenges and delays that have affected the project, such as supply chain issues, weather conditions, and planning permissions. The report stressed the importance of ensuring that the homes are allocated fairly and transparently

via Homefinder, but with a strong local connection requirement as laid out in the planning policy.

This is the first Council Housing in West Somerset in a generation, but with only 55 units will not solve the housing crisis. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it will release other properties in Minehead so that more families can be housed.

Proposed Ideas for Future Meetings:-

- A regular slot early on the agenda for members of the Neighbourhood Beat Team to come and give ASP updates on local issues. Also the opportunity for the police to network for half an hour before the meeting starts and address any individual questions from members of the LCN.
- Health and Wellbeing (H&W) – Presentation from SALC, Fodo Higginson on the grant scheme available. Community mapping showing how and where services can be accessed. Any possibility of the Onion Collective doing a presentation on their “understory” software and mapping data?
- The LCN chair suggested that it would be useful to invite a representative from Magna Housing Association to a future meeting. Magna is the largest social housing provider in the LCN area and it would be useful for them to give a comprehensive presentation and answer any questions. The LCN members agreed that this would be a valuable opportunity and asked the officers to arrange this as soon as possible. The chair also proposed that the LCN should explore other ways of addressing the housing needs and challenges in the area, such as identifying potential sites for new developments, supporting community-led housing initiatives, and engaging with landlords and tenants on improving housing standards and affordability. The LCN members welcomed these suggestions and agreed to discuss them further at a future meeting.

- Young People and Family Support – A presentation from Connect Somerset and Homestart (West Somerset).
- Lack of access to services – banks and post offices in rural areas are closing! Need to “use it or lose it” especially the post offices.
- At the end of each agenda, an opportunity for participants to raise any “burning issues” that they want to address and or possible topics or themes for future exploration.

A list of actions is recorded on this link:-

[MineheadandWatchetActionLog1.pdf \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Item 51: Agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

Dates for future meetings:-

- Thursday 17 October 2024 at 6:30pm
- Thursday 9 January 2025, at 6:30pm
- Thursday 10 April 2025, at 6:30pm
- Wednesday 16 July 2025, at 6.30pm (AGM)

We hope to continue to use West Somerset House as long as possible but are on the look-out for alternative venues within the LCN area.

Ideally these should be able to accommodate 30-50 people, be fully accessible, have onsite parking and good wi-fi bandwidth to allow on-line participation.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcn@somerset.gov.uk