

Shepton LCN meeting notes – Monday 30th September 2024, held at Council Chamber at Shepton Mallet Council Office

In person:

Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Council
Cllr Philip Ham – Somerset Council
Cllr Edric Hobbs – Somerset Council
Cllr Martin Lovell – Somerset Council
Cllr Jayne Cox – Batcombe PC
Christopher Pearce – Coleford PC
Tony Hargraves – Croscombe PC
Les Graham – Doultong PC
Lesley Parham – Evercreech PC
Kelly Summer – Pilton PC
Tom Hollings – Pilton PC
Cllr Jane Nicklin – Shepton Mallet TC
Cllr Garfield Kennedy – Shepton Mallet TC
Alan Townsend – Coleford PC
Simon Baker – Doultong PC
Estelle Kirby – Leigh-on-Mendip PC
Iain Kirby – Leigh-on-Mendip PC
Sandy Vaughan – public

Virtual attendees:

Simon Brand – Holcome PC
Simon Collins – Stoke St Michael PC

1. Welcome and Apologies

The chair of the LCN, Cllr Philip Ham, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and did a short conversation on housekeeping. He then asked for any apologies, the apologies he received: Tony Robbins.

2. Notes from the previous meeting and actions

The chair advised everyone should have received the notes from the last meeting and asked for any amendments, Simon Brand from Holcomb Parish council advised that he and another from the Parish, Mark Davies, were noted absent when they had attended.

The chair advised that a few actions from the previous meeting had been acted upon, including Highway service, police attendance (a meeting was scheduled for the following Wednesday so police attendance should occur for the next meeting) and Parish attendance to increase, he chair advised there was more attendees in this meeting so this too had been acted upon.

3. Update from the working groups -

Highways and Traffic

- The Highways and Traffic Working Group is set to arrange a meeting within the next few weeks. This group will include members of the working group and officers to address any concerns or issues related to road safety.
- There was a mention of a useful meeting earlier in the month with Sarah Davis, a local traffic management engineer. This meeting provided valuable information about highways issues, which would be fed into the working group's discussions.
- The discussion highlighted the importance of identifying road safety hotspots, particularly in Shepton Mallet, where there has been a significant increase in traffic incidents. The group planned to have a more extensive discussion on this topic later in the agenda.
- The need for a collective approach to road safety was emphasized. This includes mapping highways issues impacting road safety and coordinating efforts among parishes to address these issues effectively.
- There was also a discussion about the importance of maintaining and clearing drains to prevent road safety issues. The group planned to develop a schedule for drain clearance and maintenance and ensure it is communicated to all parishes.

Overall, the Highways and Traffic Working Group aims to address the complexity of road safety issues through a coordinated, collective approach.

Actions from this agenda point:

- Arrange a meeting within the next few weeks to discuss highways and traffic issues.
- Collect drainage issues from parishes and communicate them to the Highways team.

Emergency Planning

- **Development and Update of Emergency Plans:** The workshop provided an opportunity for parishes to either start working on their emergency plans if they didn't have one or update their existing plans. The presence of experts allowed participants to tweak and critique their plans as needed.
- **Future Workshops:** Due to the positive reception and the usefulness of the workshop, it was decided to offer another session in the New Year for parishes that couldn't attend the initial workshop.
- **Flooding Support Group:** The workshop included representation from the flooding support group, which was particularly beneficial. This led to discussions about potentially supporting a working group focused on flooding if there was enough interest.
- **Practical Exercises:** Participants engaged in practical exercises, such as filling in forms related to emergency planning. This hands-on approach helped demystify the process and made it more approachable.

This led to a more in-depth conversation around flooding: -

- **Localised Flooding:** There were discussions about localized flooding issues in areas like Shepton Mallet, Dean, and Cranmore. It was noted that solving the area-wide problem is challenging due to the number of landowners and changes in geography.
- **Catchment Area Study:** Paul Elliston from the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is leading a catchment area study, although it is currently focused on areas like Ham and Backham. The study aims to gather data and develop solutions, but it is expected to take a couple of years before any significant impact is seen.
- **Active Flood Working Groups:** Crosscombe has an active flood working group, with Paul Hodges, a parish councillor and authority on flood management, leading the efforts. They are mapping issues and working on solutions, including understanding the connectivity of water flow and the impact of farming practices.
- **Collective Approach:** There was a strong emphasis on the need for a collective approach to address flooding. This includes mapping highways issues impacting flooding, coordinating efforts among parishes, and working with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies.
- **Highways and Drainage:** The discussion also highlighted the importance of maintaining and clearing drains to prevent flooding. There were concerns about the frequency of drain clearance and the need for a schedule to ensure regular maintenance.
- **Upstream and Downstream Impacts:** The meeting stressed the importance of understanding the upstream and downstream impacts of flooding. For example, what happens in Shepton Mallet can significantly affect areas like Crosscombe. Therefore, a coordinated effort is essential to mitigate these impacts.
- **Emergency Planning:** The Emergency Planning Workshop also touched on flooding, with discussions about developing emergency plans and the role of the flooding support group. Overall, the meeting underscored the complexity of flooding issues and the need for a coordinated, collective approach to address them effectively.

Actions from this agenda point:

- Plan another Emergency Planning workshop in January for parishes that missed the first one.
- Form a collective group of parishes to address flooding issues and work with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies.
- Develop a schedule for drain clearance and maintenance, and ensure it is communicated to all parishes.

4. Asset and Service devolution

- **Asset Management and Devolution:** The conversation highlighted the importance of managing local assets effectively and the potential for devolving responsibilities to local councils. This includes the maintenance

and management of public spaces, facilities, and infrastructure.

- **Challenges and Opportunities:** There were discussions about the challenges faced by smaller parishes in managing assets due to limited resources and budgets. However, it was also noted that devolution could provide opportunities for more localized and responsive management of assets.

- **Collaboration and Support:** The need for collaboration between parishes and higher authorities was emphasized. It was suggested that parishes could benefit from shared resources and support from larger councils or organizations to manage their assets more effectively.

- **Funding and Resources:** The discussion also touched on the availability of funding and resources for asset management. It was mentioned that parishes might need to explore various funding options, including grants and partnerships, to support their asset management efforts.

- **Examples and Best Practices:** Some examples of successful asset management and devolution initiatives were shared during the meeting. These examples highlighted how other parishes have effectively managed their assets and the benefits they have experienced from devolution. Overall, the discussion underscored the importance of effective asset management and the potential benefits of devolution, while also acknowledging the challenges and the need for collaboration and support.

Actions from this agenda point:

- Explore funding options, including grants and partnerships, to support asset management efforts.

- Collaborate with larger councils or organizations to manage assets more effectively.

5. Road Safety Mapping and discussion

- **Highways and Traffic Working Group:** The idea was to arrange a meeting with the highways and traffic working group within the next few weeks. This group would include members of the working group and officers to address any concerns or issues related to road safety.

- **Data and Feedback:** There was a mention of a useful meeting earlier in the month with Sarah Davis, a local traffic management engineer. This meeting provided valuable information about highways issues, which would be fed into the working group's discussions.

- **Hotspots and Plans:** The discussion highlighted the importance of identifying road safety hotspots, particularly in Shepton Mallet, where there has been a significant increase in traffic incidents. The group planned to have a more extensive discussion on this topic later in the agenda.

- **Collective Approach:** The need for a collective approach to road safety was emphasized. This includes mapping highways issues impacting road safety and coordinating efforts among parishes to address these issues effectively.

- **Maintenance Schedule:** There was a discussion about the importance of

maintaining and clearing drains to prevent road safety issues. The group planned to develop a schedule for drain clearance and maintenance and ensure it is communicated to all parishes.

Overall, the discussion underscored the complexity of road safety issues and the need for a coordinated, collective approach to address them effectively.

Actions from this agenda point:

- Identify road safety hotspots, particularly in Shepton Mallet, and discuss them in the next meeting.

6. Actions

These are stated below in the table.

7. Date and Venues of future meetings

Monday 27th January 2025 – Council Chamber, Shepton Mallet Office (postponed to 3rd March 2025)

Monday 28th April 2025 – Venue to be confirmed

Monday 7th July 2025 – Venue to be confirmed

Date	Action	Completed by
30/09/2024	Arrange a meeting within the next few weeks to discuss highways and traffic issues	Link Officer
30/09/2024	Collect drainage issues from parishes and communicate them to the Highways team	Link Officer
30/09/2024	Plan another Emergency Planning workshop in January for parishes that missed the first one.	Link officer
30/09/2024	Form a collective group of parishes to address flooding issues and work with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies.	Everyone
30/09/2024	Develop a schedule for drain clearance and maintenance, and ensure it is communicated to all parishes.	TBD
30/09/2024	Explore funding options, including grants and partnerships, to support asset management efforts.	Everyone
30/09/2024	Collaborate with larger councils or organizations to manage assets more effectively.	Everyone
30/09/2024	Identify road safety hotspots, particularly in Shepton Mallet, and discuss them in the next meeting.	Everyone