

Local Community Network

Yeovil LCN Annual General Meeting (AGM) notes
7.00pm Monday 23rd June 2025, Potter House Care Home

Attendees:

Alan Flint	Brympton PC
Andrea Blaney	Chilthorne Domer PC
Anita Perry	West Coker PC
Beth Poole	Somerset Council (Acting Chair)
Cllr Andy Kendall	Somerset Council
Cllr Emily Pearlstone	Somerset Council
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without PC
David Neal	West Coker PC
Heather Stokes	Montacute PC
Joshua Rutter	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Leona Drayton	Montacute PC
Natasha Rand	Somerset Connect / Yeovil Arts Space
Nataliya Wills	Somerset Council
Robin Carpenter	Hardington Mandeville PC
Sue Murrison	Closworth PC

Apologies:

Cllr Faye Purbrick	Somerset Council
Cllr Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Cllr Mike Hewitson	Somerset Council
Cllr Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Leanne Mountain	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without PC
Tina Steel	Hardington Mandeville PC
Robert Halls	Hardington Mandeville PC

Summary of key points of discussion and outcomes:

Item 1: Welcome and apologies

LCN Link Officer, Beth Poole, acting as Chair in the absence of the Chair & Vice-Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and received apologies.

Items 2 & 3: Elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the Yeovil LCN

The election process for Chair and Vice Chair of the Yeovil LCN was conducted, in accordance with the terms of reference. No nominations were received for either position. As such, an Acting Chair will be sought from attendees at future meetings for that meeting and/or a Somerset Council Officer will perform this role, until such time as a permanent Chair and Vice-Chair is nominated and endorsed.

Item 4: Consider the Annual Report on LCN work for the last 12 months

The Annual Report detailing the work and achievements of Somerset's LCNs over the past year was referenced. Key highlights included the activities of various working groups across Somerset, such as highways, active travel, flooding, and environmental working groups. It was noted that Yeovil LCN does not have any active working groups, although needs and opportunities have been identified relating to themes including crime and anti-social behaviour, creating a community 'directory' and strengthening partnerships - the latter being the very ethos of LCNs. A Highways Working group was started in Year 1 but ended through lack of participation.

The role of the LCN was discussed to bring people together, to network, share best practice, problem solve, and make more efficient use of limited resource and capacity across organisations through collaborative, co-led activities. LCNs are forums of 'voice' in which partners can support each other in achieving common aims.

It was emphasised that groups and organisations are often working toward the same objectives around similar themes within their community, while unbeknownst to them others are doing the same in a different area, leading to missed opportunities, inefficiency and duplication. Recent examples of this were highlighted. Additionally, themes and activities often impact multiple organisations and the need to work together using an integrative approach to improve outcomes was noted.

It was acknowledged that Yeovil LCN has suffered from limited LCN Link Officer Support following the departure of its original Link Officer, Nathan Turnbull, in autumn 2024, and whilst the LCN team has carried long-term vacancies. Restructuring within Somerset Council; negativity toward LCNs; and a perception by some rural parishes that the LCN is Yeovil-centric were among reasons cited for disengagement. Small rural parishes feel they're limited in what have to offer without a precept of funding to contribute, and partners want to see Somerset Council deliver services it's accountable for.

The feeling was also expressed that communities previously served by South Somerset District Council were less well-served by Somerset Council and that some communities don't identify with the geographic groupings they're now aligned with, compared with previously.

Whilst this LCN's attendance has declined since Year 1, it was noted that meetings are still generally well attended, particularly on themes and topics of interest, and that our strength will be in the networking and connections made between people, groups and organisations and the opportunities this creates to pool resources for the betterment of our communities.

Item 5: Consider the priorities and areas of focus for the next 12 months

The themes of 2024/2025 were crime and anti-social behaviour, partnership working and a community directory. However, there have been no active working groups in Yeovil LCN to progress these.

It is noted that partners don't want LCNs to be "all talk" but action relies on working group participation between meetings, supported by the LCN Link Officer. LCN Link Officers do not have the capacity to deliver projects solely, whilst also supporting two LCNs each.

Themes identified were:

- Open/green spaces and play areas – post-devolution management
- Young people's wellbeing (linked to poverty/deprivation)
- Community Safety – 'One Team' model
- Speed Watch – LCN training
- Networking / community 'go to' directory following loss of legacy SSDC officers

Item 6: Review core membership for Yeovil LCN and make recommendations

This item was not explicitly discussed owing to time constraints.

Potential barriers to engagement were explored, including the structure, formality and timing of meetings potentially being prohibitive to core member organisations and practitioners in Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sectors from attending outside their normal working hours and scheduling challenges to avoid existing town/parish meetings. It was noted that meetings during office hours are prohibitive to participants who work, including some Council Members. The role of community 'connectors' working collaboratively was noted as a potential means to address this.

Item 7: Agree the schedule of Yeovil meetings for the next 12 months

The difficulty in scheduling meetings that don't coincide with existing town/parish council meetings was explained, limiting meetings to 2nd or 4th Monday, 4th Tuesday or 3rd Thursday each month. Friday evening meetings are considered unreasonable. This is why December's meeting is close to Christmas.

Venues to be confirmed with suggestions welcome, particularly from our rural parishes. The agreed LCN meeting schedule is:

- Tuesday 23rd September 2025
- Thursday 18th December 2025
- Thursday 19th March 2026
- Thursday 18th June 2026 (AGM)

Item 8: Natasha Rand, Yeovil Art Space

Natasha spoke about Yeovil Art Space as a hub that brings together arts, heritage, and culture through community engagement activities, involving 22 voluntary organisations and community groups with an emphasis on connecting for mutual support and idea exchange. Upcoming training for parent support and facilitating community get-togethers is available, and Promise Works was mentioned as being valuable to rural areas in supporting vulnerable young people where youth services are otherwise lacking.

The Community Takeover 18 June – 5 July 2025 was promoted, featuring local artists, community projects and events including Super Saturday funded by the Arts Council. More information can be found here: <https://yeovilartspace.uk/communitytakeover/>

The 'Our Town' partnership project was also highlighted with opportunities for creative involvement in its program of events. More information can be found here: [OUR TOWN – Make Yeovil Creative](#)

Community participation in upcoming events like Super Saturday and Yeovil Together was encouraged, with a closing note on the importance of building pride and affection between town and rural areas within our LCN area.

Item 9: Joshua Rutter, Police Sergeant, Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Presentation: Yeovil LCN area crime statistics



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Key points:

The statistics provided for Yeovil area are not exact owing to boundary inconsistencies between police and LCN but provide an indication. **Crime statistics and mapping for your area can be located here using your postcode: [Home | Police.uk](#)**

Crime Statistics: Recorded crimes include anti-social behaviour (2,639), burglary (145), criminal damage (415), theft (1,155), and violence against the person (2,362).

Anti-social behaviour and street drinking problems in summer 2024 led to multiple criminal behaviour orders, CPNs, and housing closures.

The LCN area has 210 Neighbourhood Watch schemes, 14 Community Speed Watch schemes, 9 Farm Watch, and 9 Horse Watch.

Policing Priorities are anti-social behaviour, retail crime, violence against women and girls, and visibility. There is increased neighbourhood police presence from the 'Safer [Yeovil] Town Centre' project.

Item 10: Any other business

SALC Community Health & Wellbeing Grants are being relaunched, with opportunities highlighted for small parishes such as Closworth: <https://mailchi.mp/215a0b5b3b37/salc-community-health-wellbeing-programme-newsletter-june-2025>

Upcoming dates for the Community Solution Seekers Project and Wessex Water drop-in sessions were shared.

If anyone would like to represent Yeovil LCN on the Somerset Active Travel Group, please express your interest via yeovillcn@somerset.gov.uk

Our thanks were expressed to Potter House Care Home for providing our meeting space and complimentary refreshments. Donations were invited to their nominated charity Alzheimer's Society via https://www.justgiving.com/page/potter-house-care-home-skydive?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015 and attendees are invited to leave a review of the venue via Google.