



# Local Community Network

**Avalon and Poldens LCN Extraordinary Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026  
St Dunstons House, Glastonbury and online.**

## **Attendees:**

Charlotte Griffin (LCN Link Officer, Somerset Council)  
Chris Bennetts (Meare PC)  
David Thomas (Catcott PC)  
Emma Coombes (Ashcott PC)  
Ewan Jones (CEO, SALC)  
Fen Bagias (Step, Ride, Thrive Project Manager)  
Fodo Higginson (SALC)  
Heather Shearer (Somerset Councillor/Street/Walton PC)  
Jacqui Cross (PCN)  
Jenny Lawrence (Ashcott PC)  
John Dodson (SNWA)  
Jon Cousins (Glastonbury TC)  
Kate Hellard (Localities Manager, Somerset Council)  
Liz Leyshon (Somerset Councillor)  
Shelia Petherbridge (West Pennard/Butleigh PC)  
Simon Carswell (Somerset Councillor/Street PC)  
Stephen Page (Somerset Councillor)  
Terry Napper (Street PC/Glastonbury TC)

## **Virtual attendees:**

Ewan Cameron (Somerset Councillor)  
Jessica Lewin (Connect Somerset Champion)

## **Apologies:**

Burtle PC

### **1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)**

The co-vice Chair's of the Avalon and Poldens LCN agreed for Charlotte Griffin (LCN Link Officer) to facilitate this meeting.

## **2. Purpose of the meeting**

Ahead of the meeting, Glastonbury Town Council agreed an extension to the Step, Ride, Thrive project with SALC until August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The purpose of the LCN meeting was for the LCN to decide whether to continue to be involved as an LCN project.

Any interested stakeholders can, however, still be involved in the project with Glastonbury Town Council and the Step, Ride, Thrive Project Manager.

The interim project report from Glastonbury Town Council, to SALC, was shared with all stakeholders of the LCN ahead of the meeting.

## **3. Overview of the project**

Fen Bagias (along with Jon Cousins) presented an overview of the project so far (see below presentation).

# Project update: Step, Ride, Thrive



**Somerset**  
Council



GLASTONBURY  
TOWN COUNCIL



**AVALON**  
MARSHES  
SOMERSET

## Project aims

- **Address barriers to accessing nature** across the Avalon Marshes - an internationally important wetland landscape - and in local communities
- **Improve active travel opportunities** through cycling and walking initiatives, plus an enhanced bus service (significant numbers of people in Glastonbury and Street do not have access to a car)
- **Promote and support community health and wellbeing** through nature engagement and active travel. People living in some parts of the LCN have statistically worse mental health than the national average

## Activity & impact so far

- **19 bike repair and education sessions delivered by On Your Bike.** More than 250 bikes have been repaired - ready for summer adventures!
- **277 passengers are estimated to have used the 668 bus to the Avalon Marshes** between April 2025 and May 2026 (including bus pass users)
- **Launch of a new Level 1 Health Walk** at the marshes, in conjunction with SASP. Launch event organised by SRT with 50 attendees and lots of other activities. An affiliated Level 3 walk has also now started
- **Nature connection workshop** for walk leaders, volunteers and VCFSE orgs delivered in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust
- **Delivery of a successful Discover Nature fortnight, from 18 - 31st May**
- **Lots of partnership working** with parishes, reserve partners, small and large VCFSE orgs, Public Health and primary care

## Marketing & engagement

- **New project website launched in April:** [stepridethrive.org](http://stepridethrive.org)  
336 unique users in the first 7 weeks. Downloadable resources are legacy assets
- **Facebook account:** [facebook.com/stepridethrive](https://facebook.com/stepridethrive)  
213K views to date (no. of times content has been displayed)
- **24 different flyers** developed by Project Lead and distributed in many community locations as well as online
- **Editorial coverage** in Mendip Times, Nub News and Local Reach, plus an advert in The Oracle
- **YouTube video of the bus route and marshes centre by Glastonbury Gabriel**, a well-known citizen videographer, in 2025

## Flyers & posters



## Discover Nature fortnight highlights

- **130 people took part in Discover Nature fortnight events and activities** organised by Step, Ride, Thrive or in collaboration with partners
- This included **six evening talks** on biodiversity, rewilding, eels, butterflies, the Honeygar trackway and The Strawberry Line greenway
- **38 events took place during the fortnight** across Avalon and the Poldens - half of these had a connection with Step, Ride, Thrive
- **47 images received for the photography competition**, from 12 out of 23 parishes
- **131 resources** downloaded from the website

## Discover Nature fortnight feedback

*"A great and important project. Big thanks for inviting us to give a talk - we met some very interesting people".* Speaker

*"I attended 2 activities on the Discover Nature Fortnight. My comments are entirely positive. The Butterflies talk and the Strawberry line talk were both excellent and inspiring. I thought the whole initiative was brilliant in so many ways. My sincere thanks to all involved".* Event attendee

*"We met and greeted many beautiful and mighty trees: alder, oak, two kinds of birch (silver birch and downy birch) and willow. Willow is perhaps the most recognised and used tree around Somerset Levels. It was most definitely magical with a "Lord of The Rings" vibe, walking around unusual wet woodland. What a great adventure with a lovely group of people and a special guide".* Tree Walker

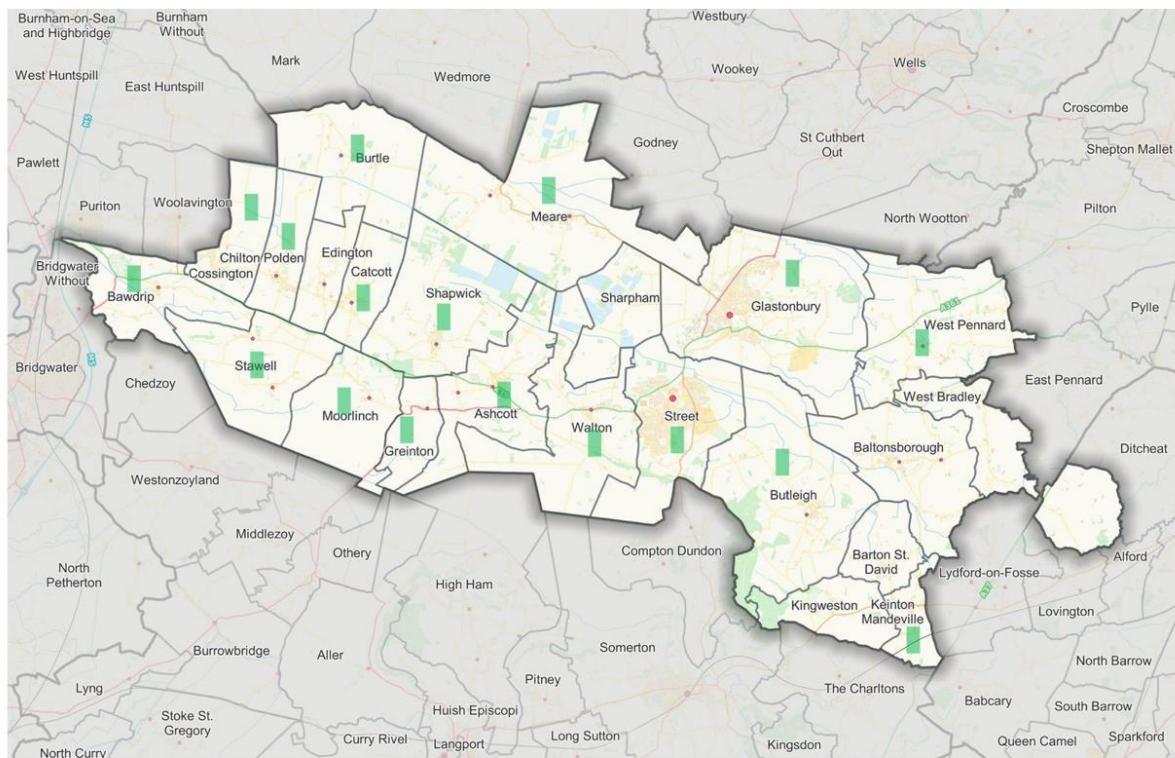
Pictures from some of the events held over Discover Nature Fortnight:



A selection of some of the pictures received for the photography competition:



A map showing the Parishes who have participated in some form to the SRT project:



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23/03/2023

## Next steps

- **Step, Ride, Thrive project steering group** has proposed that the project is extended until 31 August 2026 (with additional time for reporting)
- **Glastonbury Town Council** is supportive of the continuation of the project. The council will continue to hold the budget and follow the recommendations of the steering group. The budget remaining is £11,134.54
- **The Grant Assessment Team** has reviewed the interim report and approved an extension of the project

## Next steps

The extension of the Step, Ride, Thrive project will enable:

- **Continuation of the 668 bus** to 31st August 2026
- **Trialling weekend buses** over the summer holidays (conversations have been initiated with Wedmore Community Bus and Mendip Community Transport)
- **Creation of legacy maps** eg Bittern Trail, Polden Wheel, West Pennard walk
- **Extension of the Project Manager contract**
- **Drafting of final report**, highlighting all legacy elements (Health Walks, OYB sessions, web resources)
- **Exploration of project development** beyond 31 August 2026

## 4. Discussion around the project/next steps

Discussions focused on all aspects of the Step Ride Thrive project and stakeholders shared feedback and reflections.

It was noted that all aspects of the initial bid to SALC had been achieved and as a pilot the overall project had been successful in its initial ambition to trial enhanced bus services, albeit with some challenges. The project had very successfully delivered wider opportunities for residents across the LCN area to be involved in active travel opportunities in particular On Your Bike maintenance and children's bike ability courses, nature health walks and to participate in the Nature Fortnight.

Special thanks to Fen as the project manager were noted. It was recognised that the LCN had acted as an incubator for the projected, facilitated greater collaboration between parishes and wider partners and provided considerable administrative support to the project over the last year.

Members of the LCN present reflected on wider ambitions regarding Health and Wellbeing and other issues pertinent to residents across the area. Noting opportunities to work strategically with partners to improve the lives of residents and support the delivery of other local projects through effective use of the Link Officer time and capacity.

There was discussion regarding the implications of the LCN stepping back from an active role in steering and advising the Step Ride Thrive project. It was concluded that as the grant agreement is with Glastonbury Town Council, the project would not be adversely impacted, and Parishes and other stakeholders can work directly with them and the project manager if they would like to continue involvement

## **5. Final decision**

Councillor Stephen Page proposed that the LCN will end it's formal involvement in the SRT project but if any stakeholders wish to continue steering the project, they can do so with the direction of Glastonbury Town Council and Fen as the Project manager.

This was seconded by Councillor Simon Carswell. A vote took place and this proposal was agreed.

### **Summary of the outcome**

- Proposal agreed:
  - LCN will end its formal involvement in the Step, Ride, Thrive project

### **Next Steps**

- Glastonbury Town Council will:
  - Continue the project to end of August
  - Manage remaining budget and delivery
- Individual parishes / partners:
  - May continue involvement independently