

Local Community Network

Avalon and Poldens LCN Health and Wellbeing Working Group Notes

1st July 2026 2026: 2pm

St Dunstan's House Community Health and Wellbeing Centre,
1 Magdalene Street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EL and online

Attendees:

Charlotte Griffin (LCN Link Officer)
John Dodson (Street Neighbourhood Watch Association)
Jaqui Cross (PCN)
Rita Wren (Meare PC)
Chris Bennetts (Meare PC)

Virtual attendees:

Jessica Lewin (Connect Somerset)

Apologies:

Jenny Lawrence (Ashcott PC)
Ewan Cameron (Somerset Councillor)
Helen Hutchinson (NHS)

1. Purpose of the Working Group

The group reflected on previous discussions and agreed there was a need to move from broad conversations to a more focused programme of work. Members felt that concentrating on a small number of priorities would enable clearer outcomes and greater participation.

Two overarching areas were identified as priorities for future meetings:

1. Improving awareness of services and support available within communities
2. Community transport and access to services

(See final topics under section 6)

2. Mapping Community Services and Support

The group revisited earlier work undertaken to map local services and support available across the Avalon and Poldens area.

Discussion

- A previous spreadsheet and mapping exercise containing local services was located and will be reviewed.
- Members agreed the information remains a valuable resource but requires updating to ensure it remains current.
- Existing directories were highlighted, including:
 - Mendip Health Connections Directory
 - Somerset Insight
 - Citizens Advice work to develop a new directory
- The group agreed there is little value in duplicating existing directories and instead should focus on ensuring residents and professionals know where information can be found.

Key Points

- Online directories are valuable but may not be accessible to all residents, particularly older people and those without digital access.
- There remains a desire to explore simple printed information that can help residents identify sources of support.
- Parish councils and community organisations could play an important role in signposting residents to available services.
- Professionals working across health, voluntary and community sectors have a responsibility to understand local services and support effective signposting.

3. Social Prescribing and Community Support

Representatives from the West Mendip Primary Care Network outlined the support available through social prescribing and health connector services.

Overview

The service supports residents experiencing issues that cannot be resolved through medical treatment alone, including:

- Social isolation
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Financial pressures
- Accessing community activities and support

Support can include:

- Information and signposting
- Community café introductions
- Health connector visits
- Walk-and-talk sessions
- Access to wellbeing activities
- Support to engage with local groups and services

Examples were shared demonstrating how intensive support and "handholding" can help isolated residents reconnect with their communities.

Discussion

Members welcomed the information and recognised that many residents and councillors remain unaware of the support available. It was suggested that awareness raising should become a key strand of future work.

4. Community Transport

A significant portion of the meeting focused on transport barriers affecting access to services, appointments and social opportunities.

Issues Identified

- Limited transport options for residents without access to private vehicles.
- Difficulties travelling to hospital appointments.
- Challenges accessing health, wellbeing and social opportunities.
- Isolation experienced by older residents living in rural communities.
- Concerns regarding accessibility of existing transport services.

Existing Provision Discussed

- Slinky services
- Mendip Community Transport
- P&V minibuses
- Volunteer driver schemes
- Patient transport services
- Community transport initiatives in other parts of the UK
- School bus models that make unused seats available to residents
- Taxi voucher/token schemes operated by other councils.

Emerging Themes

- The need for creative, locally driven transport solutions.
- Better understanding of existing services before considering new provision.
- Exploring opportunities to maximise existing assets and services.
- Ensuring transport considerations support both healthcare access and wider social participation.

5. Potential Future Engagement

The group explored opportunities to increase community awareness of services.

Suggestions Included

- Attending parish council meetings and neighbourhood forums.
- Delivering presentations to community groups.
- Producing promotional materials and leaflets.
- Raising awareness through parish magazines and local communications channels.
- Hosting community information events.

A specific proposal was discussed to organise a future event bringing together transport providers, support organisations and residents to:

- Showcase available services.

- Gather community feedback.
- Identify transport barriers and potential solutions.
- Inform future priorities for the working group.

The group also noted the work of the Somerset Bus Partnership and the value of engaging transport providers directly in future discussions.

6. Agreed Focus and Purpose

Following discussion, members agreed the working group would initially focus on two key questions:

Communication and Awareness

"How can we ensure our community knows how to access support effectively?"

Transport

"How can we ensure our community can access support and services?"

These questions will guide future discussions and actions.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 29 July 2026

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Likely St Dunstons House, Glastonbury.