



Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network – Wells and Rural

Date: Tuesday, 30 April 2024

Time: 7.00 pm – 8:40

Location: Godney Village Hall, Kingdom, Lower Godney, Wells, BA5 1RZ

Chaired by: Councillor Edric Hobbs

Vice-chair: Councillor Tony Hathaway

LCN Core Membership Attendance

Name:

Councillor Tessa Munt
Councillor Tony Robbins

Representing:

Somerset Council
Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Philip Blatchford
Simon Shimmin
Lisa Pool
Philip Welch
Georgie Robbins
Denise Denis
Kathy Bissett
Dan Nicholson
Nikki Megans
Caroline Hobbs
Christine Duckett
Philip Peppard
Jon King
Beth Hancock
Angie Brenner
Barry Payne
Richard Evans
Aaron Hood

Emborough
North Wootton
St Cuthbert Out
Wells City Council
Wells City Council
Wells City Council
North Wootton Parish
Forestry England
Forestry England

[Godney](#)

Virtual attendees:

Councillor Ros Wyke
Councillor Theo Butt Philip
Councillor Heather Shearer
Jon Abbott
Jessica Lewin
WJ Lewis

Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Binegar

Rosa Kell
Sobhan White
Bel Deering
Sara Skirton
Bella Lapwood
Jessica Lewin
Kate Hellard
WJ Lewis
Rosa Kell
Siobhan White

Officer Attendance:

Terena Isaacs
Tom Parkinson
Adrian Moore

Summary of discussion:

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Theo Butt Philip	Somerset Council
Councillor Ros Wyke	Somerset Council
Jim Hardcastle	Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Notes from the Previous Meeting

Councillor Philip Blatchford proposed and Councillor Edric Hobbs seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 were a true record of the meeting.

4 Public Questions (not covered on the agenda)

None.

5 Updates from working groups

5.1 Active Travel Working Group

Councillor Tony Hathaway expressed that he would like to change this item to be called 'discussion topics' and he gave an update on what has happened since the last meeting.

He highlighted that the areas of interest have grown and they would like to spread the meetings out to include the whole community and to encourage everyone to get involved as a general member of the public.

He highlighted the following key areas of interest:

- Ramblers
- Cyclists
- Horse riders
- Dog walkers
- Bus users
- People with mobility problems

Councillor Hathaway mentioned that there would be a meeting next Tuesday evening, 7 May 2024 at 7pm at the Venue Club in Wells if anyone would like to attend.

The following would be discussed at that meeting:

1. Priority work which needed to be done will be identified.
 - A list must to be made of key areas of action to ascertain which paths need to be given attention.
 - Paths have been washed away by the storm water, bridges have been lifted, etc. which are just some of the issues as a result of the flooding.
 - Looking at the water courses.
2. The Strawberry line running through the LCN. In the end it will run from Cheddar through to Shepton Mallet. A few gaps need to be filled, but work on that is progressing.
 - Trying to get links to the Strawberry line for those not living close to it.
3. To find out what people's aspirations are for the future.
 - Get from village to village without going on the road. For example, across Chew Valley Lake over the top of the Mendips.
4. How these aspirations are going to be funded.
 - Grants.
 - S106 money which was used for planning applications.
 - Volunteer 'co-operatives' who produce products at much lower cost.

5.2 Flood Working Group

Katrina xxx (please confirm the name) gave her update.

She highlighted:

- They had also set up a working group for flooding.
- They had their initial meeting on teams and they were joined by Paul Edison and Bel Deering as part of their civil contingency team. There were lots of questions asked and answered, for example, tree planting schemes, rain gauges and who was responsible for blocked rivers (the land owner's responsibility).
- Moving forward with this group, there will be an email sent out in due course from the new person who is going to be taking over from Katrina xxx, in the next month or so.

5.3 Highways and Traffic Working Group

The Chair gave his update on the Highways and Traffic Working Group highlighting:

- They met on 29 April in Wells Town Hall and there were 5 highways officers present including Andrew Turner, Strategic Manager Highways.
- The Highways team had a pilot study in relation to highway stewardship running on Exmoor for a couple of years. There were issues which came out of that such as

- parish expectations differed widely from what Somerset had the ability to deliver.
- It was suggested that the Parish Steward Scheme, which they had invited people to look into, (an approximately £50 000 per year role) should be taken up across a LCN or a division. It was common knowledge that the Parish precepts were low and this needed to be discussed further. If the amount need could be reached, the service would, nevertheless, still continue, for example by buying the service as and when it was needed.
 - Bus users and road closures were discussed as notifications of works to take place were advised at the last minute. This was disruptive and needed to be co-ordinated properly so people knew where the temporary bus stop had been placed. Notices needed to be distributed and could be found at [Causeway one.network](#), which showed all works up to three months in advance, who was doing them and where the diversion was.
 - It was discussed that roadside ditch clearing's budget had significantly reduced from 2007 to today for the whole county. The Highway department were under a lot of pressure to carry out their statutory functions.
 - White Lining on border junctions was another one whose budget had been significantly reduced.
 - It was discussed to communicate this to the community so that they may realise the pressures the highway department were under and, hopefully, they would then be more tolerant.
 - Blocked gullies were a problem, which the new contractor, Kier, needed to investigate once reported and if deemed a flooding issue take action on them. Kier, were doing their best to catch up taking up this service whilst the previous contractor wound down.
 - The Statutory duty of inspection of roads was discussed. Town centres, A and B roads were subject to monthly inspections, minor roads, six monthly inspections and small country lanes, yearly inspections.
 - Double white lining was debated on A roads but it was agreed that this was not necessary as you should not be overtaking when the speed limit was 30.
 - A highway meeting will be held in 3 months' time and councillors and officers would be invited if there were certain things on the agenda to which their expertise were relevant.

~~6 — Question and Answer session~~

~~Discussion Item – Illegal Raves on the Mendip Hills~~

~~6.1 The Police and Forestry England regarding Rave issues in Wells and Rural LCN area_ answered questions regarding the current situation following several illegal raves in a similar area of the Mendip Hills,~~

~~It was mentioned that these raves usually took place in Stockhill Woods_ on Mendip hills.~~

~~PCSO Simon Lancet and PCSO Jason Whyatt attended the meeting to answer questions from the public.~~

~~After deliberations, the police agreed to continue offline with residents the concerns they had surrounding the reactions of and/or responses to complaints about the loud noise and disruptions to the community from the raves.~~

~~The police welcomed residents to go and discuss with them:~~

~~Residents raised the following concerns:~~

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- The loud music from the raves which impacted on the wellbeing of the residents.
- ~~The damage to property from the partygoers when they crossed private land to get to their venue by leaving gates open and animals getting out.~~
- ~~The negative impact the raves had on local businesses particularly when because people mentioned this was a nuisance in reviews online.~~
- ~~The possible harm to youth and their wellbeing as they were out in the open at night and usually wearing dark clothing.~~
- ~~The raves took place in a wider area spilling over into East Harptree and that they were taking place more often.~~
- ~~Vehicles being abandoned including one which has been reported but remains in situ.~~
- PLEASE LIST HERE ALL OTHER CONCERNS including access to Stockhill Woods

• They asked about

- The possibility of confiscating equipment and the issues surrounding this.
- The possibility of arresting offenders and the issues surrounding this.
- Using technology and/or drones to block noise making equipment.
- Reactions to late night calls complaining about noise whilst the raves were in progress.
- ~~The raves took place in a wider area spilling over into East Harptree and they were taking place more often.~~
- The large amount of complaints Parish Councillors received from residents regarding the raves.
- ~~The negative impact the raves had on local businesses because people mentioned this was a nuisance in reviews online.~~
- Informing the wider public in general of the negative impact of the raves.
- ~~The possible harm to youth and their wellbeing as they were out in the open at night and usually wearing dark clothing.~~

PCSO Simon Lancet and PCSO Jason Whyatt answered questions and in summary explained the current policing situation of the force, the order of events when a call comes in reporting an illegal gathering, the command and control measures and decision making that takes place and their desire to work closely with local residents to, where possible manage the situation.

The representative from Forestry England XZY agreed to

~~After a request from a member of the public, the~~ The police agreed to have a look at removing an abandoned vehicle which was left in the middle of Chew after the last rave and they requested the "what three words" be sent to them.

The Chair offered his phone number to residents in order to be available at any time whilst the raves were taking place.

He further requested a response and feedback from someone senior in the police force, who had authority, to speak to Councillors and/or residents on what recourse of action they had to prevent the raves, specifically mentioning that this could take place at the next LCN meeting on Thursday, 4 July in Gurney Slade.

Following a heated debate, the police officers chose to leave the meeting, shortly after which the Chair chose to close the meeting.

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Commented [KH3]: Is there more to add here?

Commented [KH4]: There was a discussion about gates and how they were locked - please add the detail of the action agreed

Commented [KH5]: This is not appropriate -

Before the meeting officially closed, Councillor Tessa Munt expressed her view that any statement which was made to the Chair being biased was inaccurate. She confirmed that the Chair encouraged everyone to be honest, that he was at the meeting to convene people and to make sure that jobs were handed over to the proper authorities to execute.

She further expressed her view that the Chair did his job as he was expected to at the meeting and requested her views to be recorded in the minutes.

Councillor Philip Blatchford seconded Councillor Tessa Munt's statement.

76 Planning for future meetings

~~During the meeting, various topics were raised which could be discussed at future meetings, such as:~~

~~It was agreed that future meetings would include:~~

- Inviting the police to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- ~~Dicsusion at the AGM regarding a forward plan~~~~That a forward plan be put together for the year ahead and discussed at the AGM. Everyone was reminded that there would there will be an annual report which willwould give a review of everything that had been discussed at this LCN for the last year activity and action in year 1 of the LCN.~~
- ~~That topics which the public would like to see discussed be put forward to the LCN, such as, for example, the wellbeing of young people at raves, their choice of venues and what they do. These would be looked at offline and an agenda would be put together.~~

~~Topics raised by participants and the general public who are encouraged to participate in the discussion at the AGM to inform future discussion topics.~~

~~Due to the meeting closing ahead of this agenda item, the AGM agenda would be discussed offline.~~

8 Action and next steps?

~~This would be discussed at the next meeting due to the meeting closing ahead of this agenda item.~~

97 Dates of future meetings

~~These would be discussed offline due to the meeting closing ahead of this agenda item.~~
Insert meeting date of AGM

Meeting ended: 8:40