



Local Community Network

Taunton LCN meeting notes – 7 July 2025 Quaker Meeting House, Bath Place, Taunton 6.30 – 8.55pm

Attendees:

2024/25 Chair: Cllr Dawn Johnson, Somerset Council

2024/25 Vice Chair: Graham Withnell, Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Cllr Tom Deakin, Somerset Councillor / Leader Taunton Town Council

Cllr Habib Farbahi, Somerset Councillor

Cllr John Hunt, Somerset Councillor

Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey, Somerset Councillor

Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Somerset Council

Cllr Andy Sully, Somerset Councillor

Cllr Kyle Gordon, Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Cllr Graham Withnell, Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Cllr Bev Fernandes, Taunton Town Council

Cllr Martin Straus, Mayor Taunton Town Council

Marcus Prouse, Taunton Town Council

Cllr Glenn Gapper, Trull Parish Council

Nigel Pearce, Taunton Chamber of Commerce

Jim Chapman, Taunton LCN Active Travel SG representative

David Northey, Somerset Bus Partnership

Tina Talbot, Thrive

Sharon Coles, Thrive

Fran Hicks, Citizens UK

Sandra Lawson, Citizens UK

Brenda Weston, Somerset independent advisory Group

Tessa Dean, Chair Taunton and Wellington CLP

Roger & Jeanette Redman

Sam and Nell Hayward

Margaret Christopher

Roger Simon

2 x member of public – no names given

Fodo Higginson, Somerset Association of Local Councils

Syed Shah, J26 Public Relations Officer

Somerset Council:

Michelle Brooks, LCN Link Officer

Emma Plummer, Senior Parish and Community Development Officer

Apologies received:

Cllr Lee Baker, Somerset Council

Cllr Tony Taylor, Bishop's Hull Parish Council

Andrew Pritchard, Connect Somerset

Ray Tully, Taunton Minster

Jeannie McManus, Young Somerset

1. Introductions (including any apologies for absence)

The Chair, Somerset Councillor, Cllr Dawn Johnson introduced the meeting and welcomed attendees to the Quaker Meeting House.

Apologies were received as noted above.

The Chair introduced Syed Shah, J26 Public Relations Officer, Syed proceeded to provide updates on current highways works in the area, including Junction 26 progress and asked that any queries regarding J26 Highways works project be directed to:

Email : Syed.shah@somerset.gov.uk

Mobile: 07717 844 042

Somerset Council website : [Major refurbishment of Junction 26 and Chelston Link road](#)

2. Consideration of Traffic & Safety Measures - Trull Road

The Taunton LCN meeting received presentations from local residents Sam & Nell Hayward and Roger & Jeanette Redman, regarding traffic and safety issues on areas of Trull Road, see attached presentation for more information.

- Sam & Nell Hayward - pedestrian safety and Speed Limit/Crossing on Trull Road near Manor Drive, Taunton

Strong community support was noted, including from Taunton Town Council, Parkfield School Council, and the Gideon Amos MP

- Roger & Jeanette Redman - Junction between Belmont Drive and Trull Road is exceedingly dangerous for vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians

Strong local community support from Belmont Drive residents

The Chair, Cllr Johnson read out information provided by Somerset Council officers, which included engineering and funding challenges and options for next steps.

Discussion

- Speed Indicator Device (SID) data showed average speeds of 26–27 mph, with peaks up to 70 mph
- Concerns raised about SID data interpretation and the need for mode-based calculations
- Local areas of 20mph schemes in Trull, Monkton Heathfield, and Othery
- Government guidance and community-led funding for speed reduction

- Suggestion of crossing on a junction – Yatton example
- Accidents / death / injury on the road
- Feasibility studies and funding options were discussed, including potential CIL funding (£150k–£200k estimate for a pelican crossing)

The LCN meeting response:

The meeting overwhelming agreed to support the additional measures discussed and for these to be submitted:

- To Somerset Council via the Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group (SG) – The Taunton LCN representative to add the schemes to the Cross LCN Active Travel SG Issues and Ambitions list for consideration by the SG
- To Somerset Council & Taunton Town Council for comment/action regarding a feasibility study, funding and external contractor use; and
- Encouraged all to comment on and share the Somerset Local Transport Plan 2025/26 using the link below:

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/active-travel/copy-of-local-transport-plan-2025/>

3. Agreement of notes from previous meeting – 10 April 2025

The Chair reviewed the notes from the previous meeting and reported that the actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed by all present.

4. Discussion and Update on Working Groups

Young People's Working Group

Taunton LCN received a Young People's Working Group (YPWG) report from the Chair of the YPWG, Cllr Bev Fernandes, see attached report.

Discussion

- Youth needs identified through surveys and reports (e.g. CICCIC, VRU)
- Barriers to access for youth services, including rural communities transport access, youth centre funding, and engagement opportunities
- Costs / availability of spaces
- Continued efforts under Taunton Town Council's guidance
- A review planned at the next AGM

The recommendation and outcome of the discussion as below:

Recommendation: YPWG Chair Cllr Bev Fernandes proposed concluding the YPWG, as it had fulfilled its remit from the Taunton LCN

Outcome: The Taunton LCN agreed to disband the group for now, with a review planned at the 2026 AGM

Cllr Fernandes thanked the group members for their dedication and collaborative efforts, which has established a solid foundation for ongoing youth support in Taunton and the surrounding areas.

Cllr Fernandes extended thanks to former LCN Link Officer Pippa Hughes, Link Officers and Taunton LCN Chair for their support

Highways Working Group

Taunton LCN meeting received a report from the former Chair of the Taunton LCN Hwys WG and 2024/25 Vice-Chair of the LCN, Cllr Graham Withnell, please see report attached.

A further verbal update report from the Joint Taunton & Hestercombe LCNs Highways WG Co-Chair, Cllr Dawn Johnson, outlining the working group ToRs and the Chairs for the Group:

Taunton LCN – Somerset Councillor Dawn Johnson
Hestercombe LCN – Somerset Councillor Norman Cavill

Discussion

- Concerns about poor communication regarding roadworks and their impact on bus routes
- Issues with bus shelter maintenance, lack of timetables, and coordination with operators
- £2m from the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was noted as a potential funding source.

Please see information below regarding the mapping recently discussed at the Joint Hwys working group:

One.network [Link to Causeway one.network](#)

One.Network will show all works that has a Streetworks permit raised:

- Planned works (Statutory Undertaker and Highway Works)
- Works in progress (Statutory Undertaker and Highway Works)
- Temporary Traffic Signal Licences
- Planned and current road closures
- Scaffolding
- Major Events

Here is the Taunton LCN You Tube Playlist where you can access the One.network training session: [Taunton LCN - YouTube](#)

Public Information Portal (PIP): [Link to Public Information Portal](#)

PIP focuses specifically on future Highways works. These are projects that have not yet been scheduled with definitive start or finish dates. While PIP might not be as all-encompassing as One.Network, it offers a valuable early glimpse into upcoming Highways schemes. This allows LCNs to identify and address any concerns or questions well before the works are fully planned and executed

Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group

The Taunton LCN representative for the Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group Jim Chapman, introduced himself and outlined his intention to contact Parish Councils to discuss active travel matters relevant to their areas.

Discussion

- Emphasis on Parish Council engagement and school-centred strategies
- Alternative transport options such as Zips mobility, trikes, and electric bikes were discussed, with mixed opinions expressed and reference made to insurance considerations and a similar scheme in Bristol

5. Chair reflections / Review Taunton LCN Annual Report 2024/25

No comments

6. Discussion future priorities & funding

Somerset Association Local Councils (SALC) Community Health & Wellbeing Grants

Fodo Higginson, SALC Community Health & Wellbeing Officer advised the Taunton LCN meeting that the SALC Health and Wellbeing Grant had relaunched on 30 June, highlighting:

- Largest grants now £10,000 – please make contact asap if you have proposals in the pipeline
- Up to £5,000 for production of Community Plans/Reviews
- Small grants of up to £1,000 for parishes with a population of under 500

Please follow the link for more information: <https://somerset-alc.org.uk/health-wellbeing/>

If you would more information, please contact Fodo on:

HWBSupport@somerset-alc.org.uk

Bus Services in Taunton

The Taunton LCN meeting heard from David Northey, Somerset Bus Partnership, regarding bus services in the Taunton, including

- Bus service cuts and fare disparities impacting accessibility
- The impact of road closures on bus services and Musgrove Park Hospital bus services / access issues to Musgrove Park Hospital
- Need for a strategy to maintain access to the hospital and workplaces despite bus cuts
- Issues with diversion of buses, lack of partnership awareness, and missing or outdated timetables at bus stops
- Introduction of new buses in Taunton, but a decline in overall bus use
- Congestion identified as the single biggest issue
- Concerns over reduction or possible removal of the £1.50 fare
- Buses serve as a vital lifeline for community connections
- Population growth and increasing congestion, while bus services are being cut
- BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) spending is insufficient

Discussion

- Concerns were raised about bus routes and services not being considered or communicated during roadworks, leading to confusion and lack of information for both operators and users
- Responsibility for providing updated timetables and maintaining bus shelters was discussed, with no clear ownership, and funding remains limited
- Hospital now sees more users reliant on bus travel / Musgrove Park Hospital influences which buses are permitted on site, impacting access
- No new buses for Staplegrove; route 28 and overcrowded service
- Limited bus services hinder town development and timely connections
- Discussion on how transport systems can better support the town

There was a suggestion on the need for further discussion on integrated transport planning and potential formation of a working group.

The Taunton LCN meeting agreed for that the decision on priorities to be discussed when a new Chair takes up post.

7. Elect the Chair of the Local Community Network

There were no nominations for Chair of the Taunton LCN.

If you are interested in being the Chair of the LCN, or have a nomination for either, please do contact the Taunton LCN Officer to discuss:

Tauntonlcn@somerset.gov.uk

8. Elect the Vice Chair of the Local Community Network

There were no nominations Vice-Chair of the Taunton LCN.

If you are interested in being the Vice Chair of the LCN, or have a nomination for either, please do contact the Taunton LCN Officer to discuss:

Tauntonlcn@somerset.gov.uk

The outgoing Chair thanked everyone for attending, for the informative presentations and valuable comments and questions reflecting the various concerns and suggestions from the attendees.

9. Date and Venues of future meetings

Meeting dates / times to be agreed at the next meeting which is currently tbc

Date	Action	Who	Completed by
7 July 2025	Draft notes: draft and circulate notes from Taunton LCN 7 July 2025	LCN Link Officer	28 July 2025
7 July 2025	J26 website link: circulate the Somerset Council J26 link and PRO newsletters when available	LCN Link Officer	28 July 2025 - with notes and as and when available
7 July 2025	Highways Mappings Portals links: circulate links with notes	LCN Link Officer	10 July 2025
7 July 2025	Town Centre e-scooter contract: update on procurement of supplier	Marcus Prouse	21 July 2025: MP received an update - there are no plans to procure a replacement supplier

7 July 2025	Submission: To Somerset Council via the Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group (SG) – The Taunton LCN representative to add the schemes to the Cross LCN Active Travel SG Issues and Ambitions list for consideration by the SG	Jim Chapman / LCN Link Officer	8 July 2025
7 July 2025	Trull Road additional traffic safety measures submission: to Somerset Council & Taunton Town Council for comment/action regarding a feasibility study, funding and external contractor use	LCN Link Officer	Meeting to take place July 2025
7 July 2025	Comment on and share the Somerset Local Transport Plan 2025/26 using the link below: https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/active-travel/copy-of-local-transport-plan-2025/	All	Ongoing – September 2025