

## **Local Community Network Meeting Notes**

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Wells and Rural

Date: Thursday, 29 June 2023

Time: 7pm – 8.30pm

Location: Priddy Village Hall - Priddy

Chaired by: Councillor Edric Hobbs

### **LCN core membership attendance:**

Councillor Theo Butt Philip

Edric Hobbs

Tessa Munt

Tony Robbins

Heather Shearer

Ros Wyke

Binegar Parish Councillor Jon Abbott

Binegar Parish Clerk Dianne Abbott

Emborough Parish Meeting Chair/Clerk Philip Blatchford

Godney Parish Councillor Richard Evans

North Wootton Parish Councillor Kathy Bissett

Priddy Parish Councillor Rachel Thompson

Priddy Parish Council Clerk Gill Pettitt

Priddy Parish Councillor Chris Dyke

St Cuthbert Out Parish Councillor Tony Hathway

St Cuthbert Out Parish Councillor Ian Humphreys

St Cuthbert Out Parish Deputy Clerk Lisa Pool

St Cuthbert Out Parish Councillor Martin Cooke

Wells City Councillor Philip Welch

Westbury sub Mendip Parish Councillor Adamos Euripidou

Wookey Parish Councillor Andy Tagg

Wookey Parish Council Clerk Denise Boulton

## **Officer attendance:**

### **Name:**

Sara Skirton, Council Staff  
Frances Gully, Council Staff  
Emily Window, Council Staff  
Adrian Moore, Council Staff  
Tom Parkinson, Council Staff (ICT)  
Claire Dicken, Council Staff  
Helen Bowen, Council Staff  
Ally Laing, Council Staff  
Sam Maguire, Council Staff

## **Virtual attendees:**

### **Name:**

North Wootton Parish Councillor Simon Shimmin  
Wookey Parish Councillor Dr David Sumner  
Hannah Snowden, Spark Somerset  
Kate Hellard, Council Staff  
Emma Plummer, Council Staff  
Tony Brooks

## **Summary of discussion:**

**Agenda   Summary of key points of discussion and outcome:   Action by:**  
**item:**

Item 1:   **To elect the Chair of the Local Community Network**

Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs was nominated by Cllr Ros Wyke,  
seconded by Somerset Cllr Tessa Munt.

There were no other nominations.

Cllr Edric Hobbs was duly elected.

Item 2: **To appoint the Vice Chair of the Local Community Network**

Parish Cllr Tony Hathway was nominated by Gill Pettitt, seconded by Parish Councillor Martin Cooke.

There were no other nominations.

Parish Cllr Tony Hathway was duly elected

Item 3: **Apologies for Absence**

Item 4: **Declarations of Interest**

Item 5: **Public Question Time**

Item 6: **To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the Local Community Network for the next 12 months**

Francis Gully (LCN Development Lead) shared a presentation on the purpose of the LCN and how it would feed back into the work of Somerset Council.

The meeting noted there was a dedicated page on the Somerset Council website at <https://somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/>.

Attendees were asked to share what themes, issues and opportunities they wanted the LCN to explore over the next 12 months.

What topics are important to our residents?

How do we know?

What data/evidence/information would help?

What could be done to solve/improve topics?

Are there local examples already working?

Who do we need to involve?

Who else could be in the room (partners and stakeholders)?

Participants were asked to list their contact details.

Top priorities were reported to be:

**Travel**

Active travel, co-ordination between buses and other modes of transport. Miscommunication: there were sometimes rumours that a bus service was not running when it was.

Traffic calming and safer roads at junctions.

Travel routes for multi-users including horse riders and walkers.

More buses and public transport, they need to run to more places.

More 20 mile an hour zones.

More community supported transport scheme eg 67 bus was supported by parishes along the route to deliver the service.

### **Highways**

The number of potholes was unacceptable.

### **Planning and Planning Enforcement**

Lack of planning enforcement; members felt lots of building work was happening, but not always that which was given permission.

Mendip's Local Plan needed to be updated, we need a county wide plan.

Villages need to be supported to keep their identity in future local plans.

Construction levy needs to be introduced.

### **Environment and Climate Change**

Renewable energy should be used at every opportunity.

More dark skies.

More green corridors.

### **Communications**

Reliable and fast broadband needs to be available in rural areas as well as towns.

### **Public Safety**

Particularly on top of the Mendips.

### **Fly tipping/rubbish**

Unacceptable number of incidents unresolved.

### **Housing**

Affordable housing in rural areas

**Other priorities, which were captured on flipchart paper included:**

Transport: buses/speed limits, MUPs Active Travel,  
“connectivity”/access (buses: hrs/routes/socialising),  
supermarket – sponsors?

Affordable housing: younger? Lower income? Not so commuter-focused

Devolution of (minor) planning issues, going to  
site/understanding locality, stronger voice for very local  
knowledge (eg garage conversions)

Environment: Strawberry Line, Dark Skies, Waterways, Green  
Corridors, Highway Rangers, Flooding

Mendip motorway (road from mendip Inn across top of the  
Mendip’s). Accidents and speeding.

Bus service/public transport

Heritage

Internet/mobile

Fly tipping/litter

Development where the infrastructure exists

Inappropriate development

Affordable rural eco housing

Traffic calming/quiet lanes/safer roads and junctions

Winter emergency plans – general emergency planning

Environmental action including planting and regenerative  
farming

Support in the home – facilities for changing need

Improved communications eg mendip bulletin, community  
bulletin? LCN Bulletin?

Public transport – one bus in Priddy on Tuesday. Survey should  
lack of info on slinky buses

Impact on infrastructure by new houses

Road safety particularly on A37, A371, A361 and B3135

Speed of traffic

Lack of capacity on road in terms of size and width

Sign posting (that is TomTom and Sat Nav issues)

Ensuring minority parishes have agency and voice in their LCN

Influence on wider planning issues

Maintaining the identity of villages

Ensuring appropriate infrastructure

Working together to ensure the sustainability of mobile library

Sharing the example of the parish supported Burnham to wells community bus

Advancing the Strawberry line together.

**Ideas for improving/solving the local issues included:**

Resident groups

Neighbourhood plans

Community groups/organisations

Tourism and heritage – associated rural skills/crafts

Mendip motorway – involve police/highways, speed cameras

Buses/public transport – involve sub companies/Somerset

Council/DofT/WECA/N. Somerset, increase timetable, service more villages/towns, run buses later, be more reliable

Need more money

Policing

Local transport links

Projects for youth in the community

Use the information gathered from the Priddy Community Survey

A good example of affordable housing is Reeves Paddock

What Somerset Council land is available

Self-build?

Re traffic calming – better liaison with Highways officers and SC councillors – listen

Re winter emergency – review existing, use shared facilities and partnership between parishes

Re sustainable travel – Yeo Valley Trail very successful

AONB strategic Network Plan

Better links between village and town

Priddy and Westbury sub Mendip have dark skies

Support in the home

Reduce the cost to parish of licences for infrastructure such as dog bins, signage, street events (road closures)

Tackle intermittent rural theft crime with Farm Watch, Church

Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Horse Watch  
Pot hole patching – but that’s false economy?

The network were asked, who should be invited to future meetings:

Maybe the transport company,  
AONB (Jim Hardcastle)  
Mendip Society  
Priddy Friendly Society  
Priddy Folk Festival  
Yeo Valley and Alvis Bros  
Local Businesses  
Schools  
Church  
Pubs  
The connect centre  
Housing Officers  
Homelessness Reduction Board,  
Make use of the Streetlake website

It was expected that each LCN would have a number of priorities going forward. It may be possible to set up sub-groups. Each LCN will develop their own plan.

Meanwhile the network noted that “hard data” could be gathered by intelligence officers at the council, and “soft data” would come from what the residents were saying. Both would help the network understand the area and what opportunities they had to serve the area better.

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Item 7: **To agree the frequency of meetings**

The Network hoped to have its next meeting at the mid-September/early October, and from then on hold the meetings every other month (avoiding late June each year).

Members were asked to email the LCN team with possible dates.

Members were keen to make progress so between now and next meeting they agreed the notes from the meeting should be shared with all the parish councils. The key themes should be listed and a request for volunteers and representatives from other groups made. So that by the time the LCN met again some organising will have been done. The next agenda might include what working groups should be set up.

Before the next meeting the LCN team will be compiling a data pack for each area. The team agreed to discuss with the Chair and Vice Chair who else should be invited to the next meeting.

Members agreed that Thursday was generally a convenient night for meetings of the LCNs.

Members noted neither Chewton Mendip nor Litton Parish Councils were able to be represented at the meeting. Contact would be made with them before the next meeting.

Item 8: **The schedule of meetings for the next 12 months**

It was requested that the next meeting was scheduled for September, and then followed bi-monthly after that. Thus, future meetings would fall in November, January, March and May.

Request was made for a “teams” link for future meetings.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team [lcn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lcn@somerset.gov.uk)