



Bridgwater

Local Community Network

Annual report 2025 - 2026

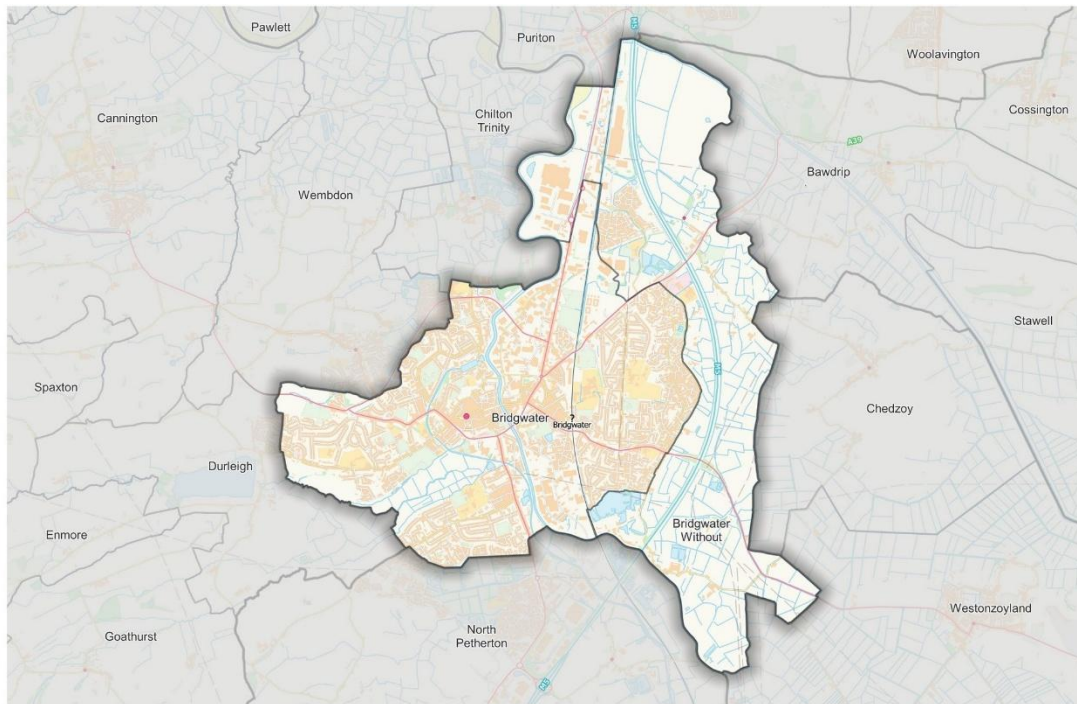


Table of Contents

Bridgwater LCN Area.....	3
Bridgwater LCN through the year... ..	4
Overview of the year	5
Annual Meeting	6
Building momentum behind the scenes	7
Community funding and partnership working in focus	8
Hinkley Point C.....	9
Bridgwater Together	10
Internships	11
Strengthening Links.....	12
Cross LCN working	13
Community safety and policing in focus.....	14
Engagement, communication & awareness.....	15
The year in summary.....	16
Link officers reflections.....	17
Meeting Participation.....	18
Meeting Participation.....	19
Contact details.....	20

Bridgwater LCN Area

The geographical area of Bridgwater LCN comprises of two Councils, Bridgwater Town Council. [Bridgwater Town Council](#) and Bridgwater Without Parish. [Bridgwater Without Parish Website](#) | [Bridgwater Without Parish Website](#)



© Crown copyright 2021 OS 100038382EUL. Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions

23/03/2023

Bridgwater LCN has a total population of app 41,100 residents. 16.5% of the population of Bridgwater is over the age of 65. This is a lower proportion than the wider Somerset population, of which 24.8% are aged 65 and over.

Bridgwater LCN through the year...

Bridgwater LCN has developed to reflect the breadth of partnership activity already taking place locally. Through detailed discussions with Bridgwater Town Council and local elected members we have built activity and discussion in areas to complement existing priorities. There has therefore been a focus on work with partner organisations ensuring improved links into local forum including those hosted by BTC.

This report will therefore highlight some of the networking and gathering of community insight undertaken by the LCN link officer over the year.



Photo of Bridgwater Arts Centre

Overview of the year



Annual Meeting 2025



Photo of Gravity Site from a distance

June marked a key moment for reflection and setting direction at the AGM, bringing partners together to review progress and agree on priorities for the year ahead. The guest speaker was Nick Cooper, Community Engagement Manager, Bridgwater for Agratas, who gave a presentation regarding the new factory under construction in between the parishes of Puriton and Woolavington, neighbouring Bridgwater. Part of the Tata Group, Agratas is building a new manufacturing facility at the Gravity Smart Campus in Somerset, with the steel frame of

Building One recently completed and production expected to start in early 2028.

Once fully operational, the facility is set to create more than 4,000 jobs and contribute over £700 million in annual economic value to the South West region. Recruitment for operational roles is underway, and the site is already generating significant employment in the construction phase. Agratas Bridgwater will meet almost half of the UK automotive sector's battery cell demand and become one of the largest manufacturing facilities in Europe.

Building momentum behind the scenes

While formal meetings were limited in July and August, this period focused on groundwork. The link officer reached out to Bridgwater Town Council to develop a working relationship that did not duplicate existing activity. In turn the officers from the Town Council extended invitations to the Link officer to attend forums such as the Tourism forum and the Transport forum. Work also continued to align with partners on emerging priorities such as community health and wellbeing. For our communities this means that the scarce resources are used in a more efficient manner.

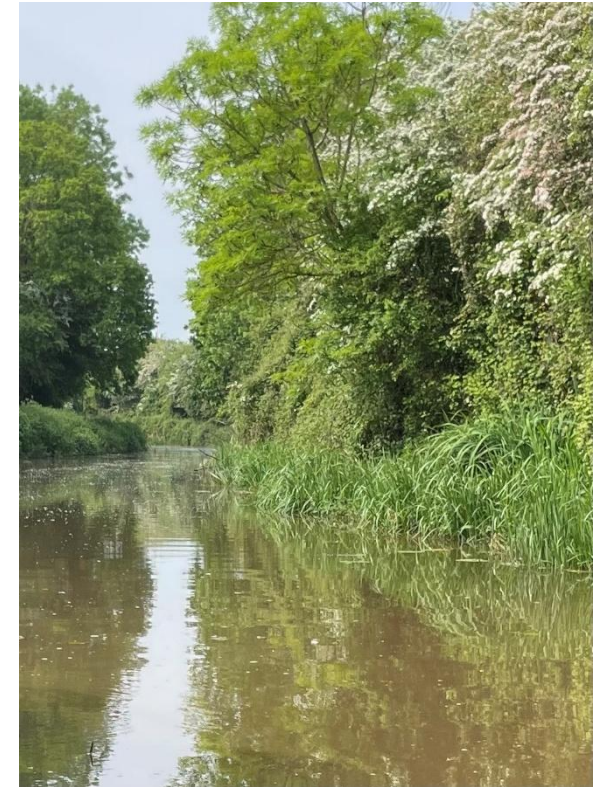


Photo of Bridgwater and Taunton Canal

Community funding and partnership working in focus

At the main LCN meeting in September , partners came together at the YMCA in Bridgwater to explore opportunities linked to the Hinkley Point C Community Fund.

Highlights from the meeting included:

- Strengthened links with Somerset Community Foundation and local funding programmes
- Actions agreed for the link officer to engage with Bridgwater Town Team meetings and Bridgwater Town Council forums, improving local influence and coordination.
- Growing collaboration across community organisations, education, and local services.

This meeting provided an opportunity for Somerset Community Foundation to remind participants how to apply for funding through the Hinkley Point funding programme.

Photo of 'Little Jessie', a life-sized Gypsy cob horse on the edge of St. Matthew's field, just around the corner from the YMCA, which was installed in September 2025 and created by Romany Artist Jake Bowers.



Hinkley Point C



In October, Bridgwater was one of the LCNs that facilitated engagement events with their members at the request of the service team working with EDF at Hinkley Point. These sessions focused on discussing the potential challenges associated with a larger workforce in the area, as well as exploring ideas for how these issues could be managed or reduced. The engagement events were held alongside the community forums run by EDF and prompted open and constructive discussion.

The key points raised were later taken forward by two members of the LCN to a joint meeting involving EDF, Somerset Council and the Somerset Community Foundation, which enabled the key decision makers to hear from their local communities.

Bridgwater Together



Photo credit;
Healthwatch Somerset

Bridgwater Together is a free annual community celebration of cultural diversity that takes part each year in Bridgwater and across a number of other towns in Somerset. November 2025 was its eleventh year and theme was 'One Town, One People, One World'.

The link officer volunteered with the team at Healthwatch Somerset at the event which ran across two venues Bridgwater Town Hall and The Engine Room. The celebration is a positive force, actively uniting the town's diverse populations, celebrates shared humanity and provides a platform for different cultures to share food, music and traditions.

Internships

Bridgwater LCN meetings run on a quarterly basis

The December 2025 LCN meeting was held in the Board room of UCS Centre in Bristol Road at their kind invitation. Staff from the College spoke about the very successful internship programmes that they run in partnership with Discovery, EDF/Hinkley and Avon and Somerset Police. The outcomes have been very positive for the participants.



This meeting started a chain of cross-sector collaboration around supported internships and their promotion across a diverse range of partners, including the VCFSE sector and Parish Councils. After the meeting the link officer also attended a presentation from Discovery talking about the internships from their perspective which was very helpful and complemented the presentation given by the UCS College Group. The link officer has since been able to promote the partnership to a local charity, who are looking to employ an intern.

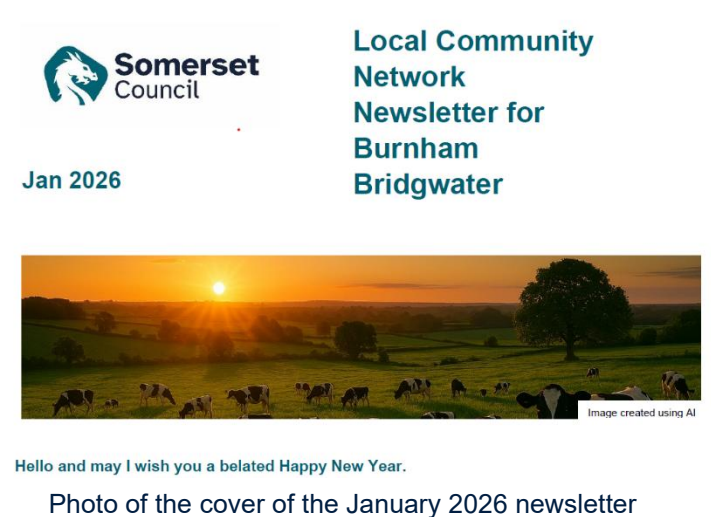
Strengthening Links

The link officer launched a new cross LCN monthly newsletter at the end of 2025 which aims to inform local stakeholders of topics of interest from Somerset Council and trusted partners. This has been well received, with a compliment from one of the elected members and well as positive feedback from a local charity. This has enabled the LCN to signpost to information from Kier, Wessex Water, SASP and Avon and Somerset Police to name a few organisations.

“We really appreciate the newsletter this has been valuable for the team”

“Thank you Gill – some very interesting articles”

The link officer has been attending a number of different meetings in and around Bridgwater, including Somerset Libraries launch of their participation in the National Year of Reading held at the Bridgwater Arts Centre. The launch showcased local library services and featured a number of local authors.



Cross LCN working

February brought together a range of cross LCN working.

A review of the LCN's since their inception in 2023 was started with a workshop held in the Canalside Conference Centre in Bridgwater, where the link officer facilitated one of the focus groups.

Somerset Council has started updating the Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy, which will set out the key priorities for the next three years (2026–2029).

To make sure the Strategy reflects what really matters, they wanted to hear from people who draw on care and support, unpaid carers, and the organisations and professionals who provide services across Somerset. The link officer was able to facilitate several cross LCN focus groups to help inform the strategy refresh, which has helped to ensure that the voice of the community was included.

Our priorities:



Community safety and policing in focus



Bridgwater LCN March quarterly meeting was pleased to host the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset Police Force and an Inspector from the neighbourhood policing team.

Key highlights that were shared included;

- Overview of local crime patterns and policing structure
- Insight into neighbourhood policing resources and coverage
- The ongoing work around Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Contributions from partners including Citizens Advice, Thrive, and SALC

This meeting strengthened links between the LCN and community safety partners, providing valuable insight for local stakeholders. The link officer has also been able to make introductions between senior officers within adult social and the PCC to facilitate closer working relationships.

Engagement, communication & awareness

Link officer activity focused on:

- Attending meetings to discuss the process around managing the Pride in Place monies that have been awarded to Bridgwater South.
- Continued partner engagement across community organisations including attending a workshop on the Costal Place Partnership leadership training programme, run by SASP.
- Meeting with the local village agents and discussing fundraising with a local VCFSE organisations.
- The link officer has been attending and contributing at meetings around the Bridgwater 'Town of Culture' submission.
- Attending Bridgwater Annual Town Meeting. The link officer attended the Annual Town meeting. An excellent short film entitled Brick by Brick was shared, which was created by Somerset Film and promotes the vibrant nature of the town.
- The link officer has also been undertaking training through the HDRC (Health Determinants Research Collaboration) The HDRC is an active 5-year programme, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), aimed at reducing health inequalities in Somerset.



Photo of the LCN team at the HDRC training

The year in summary...

Across the year, the Bridgwater LCN and the link officer has:

- **Continued to facilitate** quarterly LCN meeting
- **Strengthened partnerships** across education, policing, health, and community organisations.
- **Improved engagement with local forums** such as Town Teams, Parish councils and VCFSE forums
- **Focused on key themes** including active travel, community wellbeing, and safety
- **Created a platform for strategic conversations**, particularly around large-scale developments like Hinkley Point C and Adult Social care
- Continued to **build its identity and engagement approach**, recognising the need for tailored local solutions

Link officers reflections....

Looking back over the past year, I have really valued the opportunity to support the development of the Bridgwater LCN and to work alongside such an engaged network of partners. Bridgwater already benefits from strong partnership working, and my focus has been on ensuring the LCN complements this, by bringing people together, sharing insight, and creating space for meaningful conversations.

A key part of the role has been building and strengthening relationships. Working more closely with Bridgwater Town Council, local forums, community organisations, health partners, education providers and policing colleagues has helped create opportunities for collaboration and improved how we connect across the system. These relationships often develop gradually, but they are fundamental to enabling joined up working and better outcomes for our communities, as was highlighted in the Coastal Place Partnership Leadership programme run by SASP. (Somerset Active Sports Partnership)

Throughout the year, the LCN has provided a platform for important local discussions. From conversations about major developments such as Hinkley Point C, to community funding, internships, community safety and wider wellbeing, it has been encouraging to see how bringing partners together helps build shared understanding and supports practical action and has ensure that a local voice is being heard.

The LCN plays a simple but important role in creating the conditions connections to happen.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to everyone who has engaged with the LCN over the past year, whether that is reading our newsletter, sharing stories, inviting us to meetings or speaking at our LCN meetings.

Myron E. Rogers, who is an author, speaker and consultant in leadership development and change, created Myron's Maxims, two of which are 'Connect the system to more of itself' and 'Start anywhere, follow everywhere', which sum up much of the work of the LCN.

Thank you.

Gill Keniston-Goble

LCN Link Officer for Bridgwater LCN.

Meeting Participation

Elected Members

Cllr Diogo Rodrigues

Cllr Hilary Bruce

Cllr Leigh Redman

Parish representation

Puriton Parish Council

Other Participants

Avon and Somerset Police

Somerset Association of Local Councils

Thrive/Village Agents

SASP

Active Travel

UCS College Group

Bridgwater Town Team

YMCA

Westfield Church

Town Wardens

Healthwatch

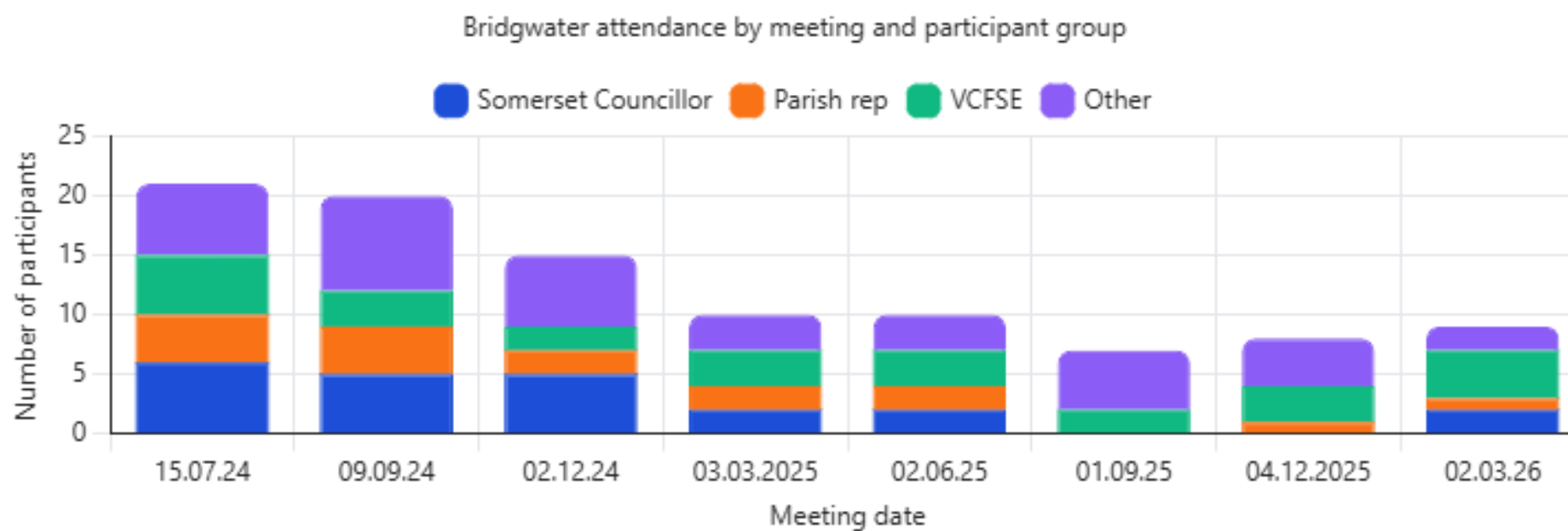
On your Bike

Citizens Advice

The Pantry

Somerset Council

Meeting Participation



Contact details

Gill Keniston-Goble

LCN Link Officer for Bridgwater LCN.

Email; bridgwaterlcn@somerset.gov.uk

Website: [Somerset Local Community Networks](#)