Somerset Council

Shepton Local Community Network

Annual report 2025/26

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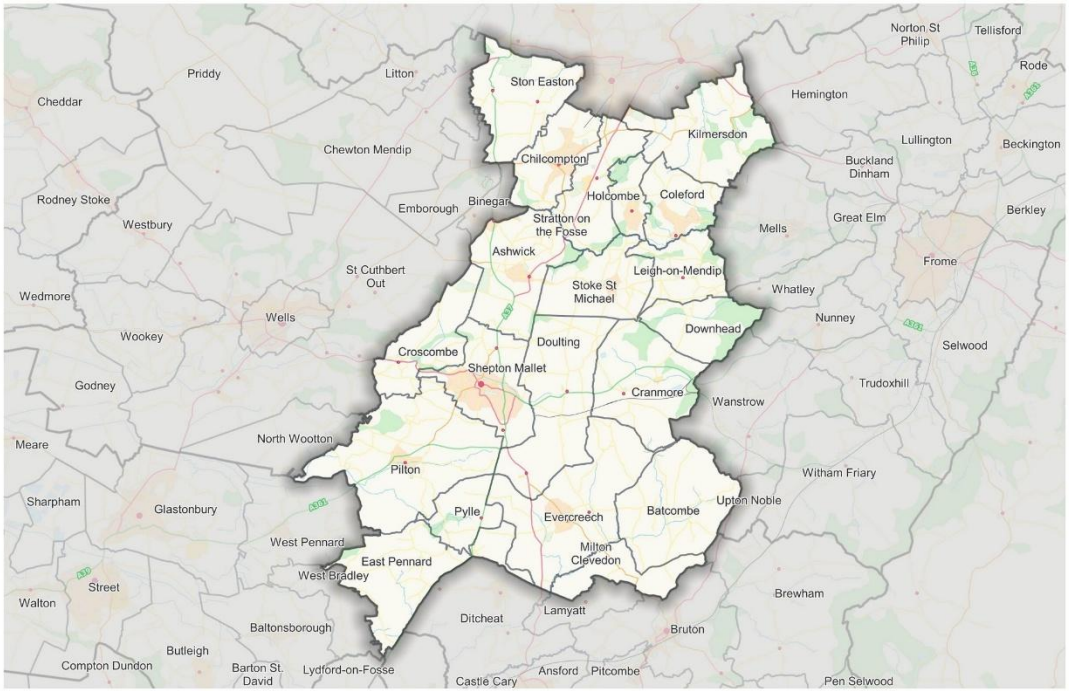
Shepton Local Community Network

The Shepton Local Community Network (LCN) covers Shepton Mallet and nineteen surrounding town and parish council areas within the eastern Mendip part of Somerset. The area includes a mix of market town and rural communities, with key settlements including Shepton Mallet, Pilton, Evercreech, Coleford, Doulting, Kilmersdon and Batcombe. The area is characterised by its rural landscape, agricultural activity, quarrying industry, local businesses and strong voluntary and community sector networks.

The Shepton LCN area contains a number of significant cultural, environmental and economic assets, including the internationally recognised Glastonbury Festival held at Pilton. The area also includes important transport corridors, rural communities and service centres that influence many of the priorities identified through LCN engagement and partnership activity.

Local Community Networks were established by Somerset Council to provide a forum for town and parish councils, community organisations, public services, businesses and residents to work together on issues of shared local importance. Through regular meetings, working groups and partnership activity, Shepton LCN supports local engagement, identifies priorities, facilitates partnership working and helps connect community perspectives with wider Somerset Council and partner programmes. During 2025–2026, key areas of focus included highways and road safety, community transport, health and wellbeing, children and young people, and strengthening communication and partnership working across the area.



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23/03/2023

Further information about the Shepton LCN is available on the Somerset Council website: https://lcn.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/local-community-network-areas/shepton/

Introduction

Shepton LCN connects parish and town councils, community groups, businesses, voluntary organisations, public services and residents to identify shared priorities and develop practical solutions to local challenges.

During 2025–2026, communities across the Shepton LCN demonstrated the resilience, creativity and collaborative spirit that define this part of Somerset. From initiatives tackling transport barriers and improving road safety to projects supporting health and wellbeing, community resilience and opportunities for young people, partners have worked together to turn local priorities into meaningful action. These achievements reflect the strength of the area's communities and a shared commitment to improving life for residents while preserving the qualities that make the Shepton LCN such a special place to live, work and visit.

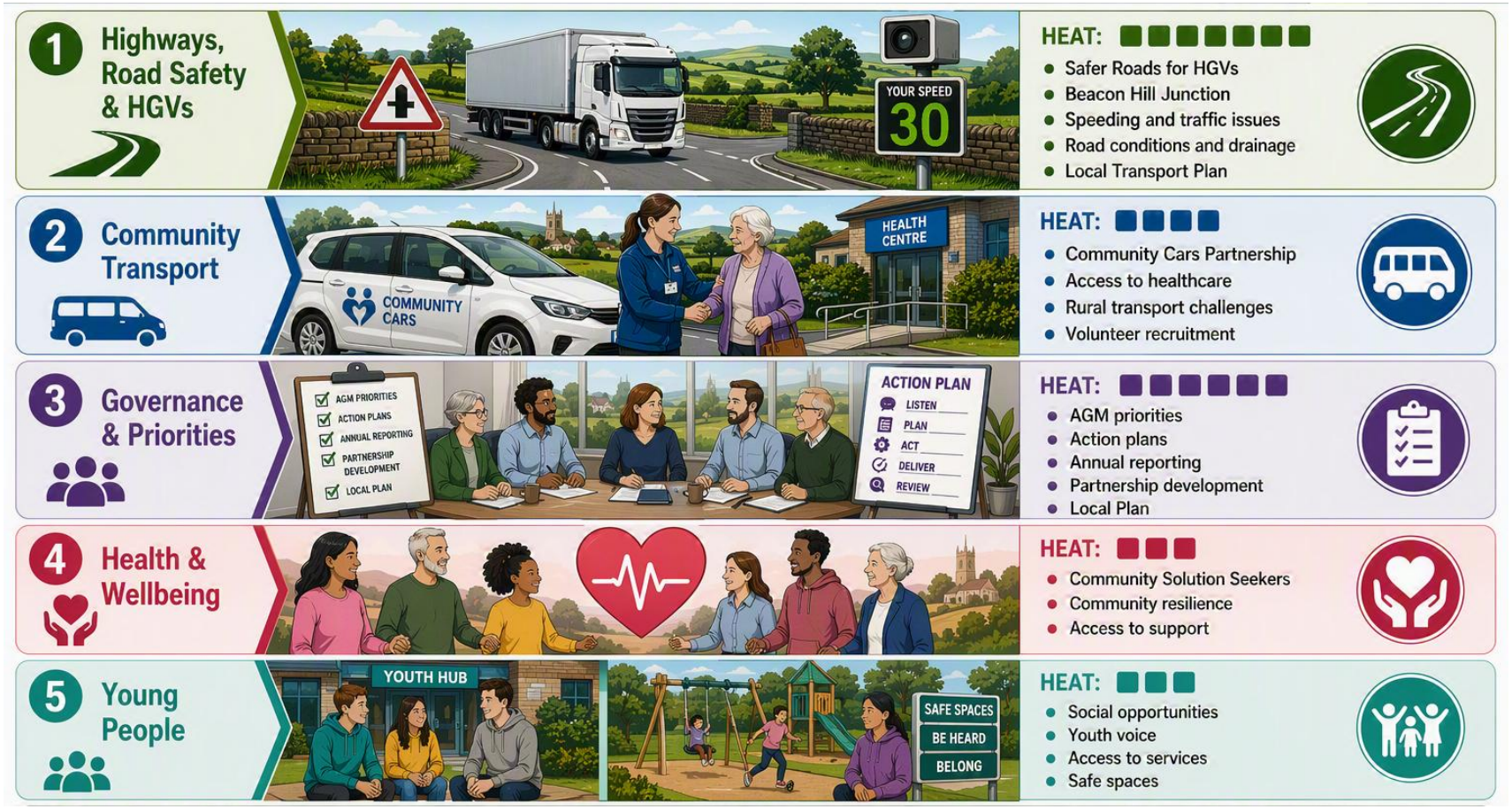
Cllr Martin Lovell
Chair of Shepton LCN
Somerset Council and Shepton Mallet Town Council

Cllr Nick Hall
Co-Vice Chair of Shepton LCN
Pilton Parish Council

Cllr Barry Clarke
Co-Vice Chair of Shepton LCN
Somerset Council

Main Themes

The strongest themes across Shepton LCN during 2025-2026 were Highways and Road Safety, Community Transport and Partnership-led solutions, including Health and Wellbeing and Young People.



Highways and Traffic Working Group

The Shepton LCN Highways and Traffic Working Group continued to provide a structured forum for discussing road safety, speeding, road condition, drainage, signage, traffic management and parish highways concerns. The group's role is to support communication between local representatives and Somerset Council staff, apply local knowledge to highways planning and help shape recommendations to the wider LCN.

Highways safety and traffic management was identified as one of the Shepton LCN's priority areas for 2025–2026. The group discussed evidence-led approaches to speeding and traffic concerns, including Speed Indicator Devices, speed compliance data, accurate location information, photographs and structured reporting.

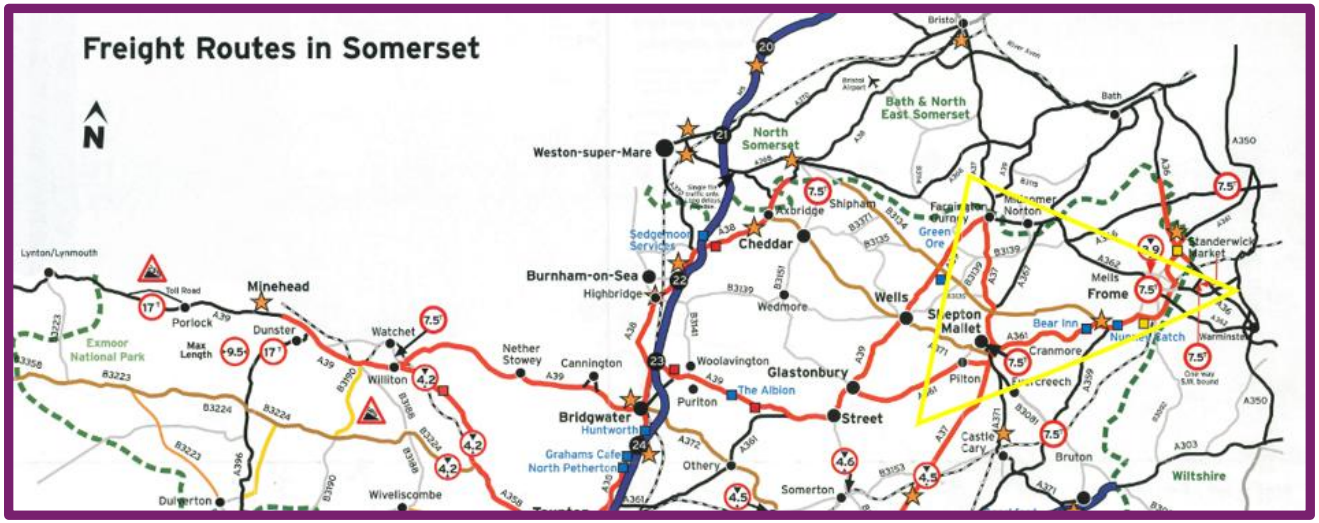
The working group met in August 2025, November 2025 and April 2026 and facilitated engagement between parish councils and specialist Somerset Council teams covering maintenance, drainage, bridges, traffic management, road safety, streetworks and transport planning.

A programme of working group meetings was established to gather parish concerns relating to speeding, drainage, flooding, road condition, signage, junction safety and HGV impacts.

The group supported the development of the dedicated Safer Roads for HGVs project following significant member interest in freight movement and road safety issues.

Safer Roads for HGVs

Safer Roads for HGVs emerged as a dedicated Shepton LCN workstream following longstanding parish concerns about the impact of heavy goods vehicles on rural roads, villages and infrastructure. Concerns included unsuitable routing, road surface degradation, flooding and drainage issues, signage, hedge encroachment, sat-nav routing, junction safety and the wider impact of freight movements on communities.



A dedicated Safer Roads for HGVs Forum was held on 28 October 2025 at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet. The forum brought together town and parish representatives, Somerset Council highways and transport colleagues and local businesses including quarry and haulage interests. The key stakeholders developed a more strategic approach to HGV routing by moving discussions away from isolated village concerns towards wider freight corridor planning.

The Beacon Hill junction, the A37, Old Frome Road / Green Lane and surrounding freight routes were identified as central areas of concern. The workstream has recognised that changes in one location can affect neighbouring villages, so the issue needs a network-wide approach rather than isolated fixes.

Support secured from highways, transport and business representatives will facilitate further route mapping, evidence gathering and partnership working during 2026-2027.

Mendip Central Community Cars Partnership

Community transport became one of the strongest areas of practical partnership development during 2025–2026. Discussions with parishes, community groups and partner organisations identified transport as a clear barrier to health appointments and essential activities, particularly in rural areas and for vulnerable residents, young people, older people and families affected by limited public transport.

The Mendip Central Community Cars Partnership was established under the Shepton LCN as a collaborative forum supporting town and parish-led community transport schemes. First formal partnership meeting was held on 14 October 2025.

Initial work of the LCN explored the option of a Community Interest Company (CIC), but discussions developed towards a parish-led model supported by a wider partnership. This allows local areas to develop arrangements suited to their geography and capacity, while benefiting from shared guidance around governance, DBS, safeguarding, insurance, volunteer recruitment, booking and administration arrangements.

The work drew on learning from established schemes including Frome Community Drivers and West Somerset arrangements. Initial funding secured through Somerset Community Foundation, with support from Laura Miller as Connect Somerset Champion, helped provide a basis for further development. The partnership has also linked with Spark Somerset, Somerset Council transport colleagues, health partners and community organisations.

The partnership focuses on shared resources, guidance, governance advice and volunteer recruitment support rather than a single centrally operated transport scheme.

Health and Wellbeing – Community Solution Seekers

Health and wellbeing has remained a central theme. Shepton LCN supported delivery of the Community Solution Seekers programme, led by Thrive (formerly Community Council for Somerset), and contributed to eight sessions held between March 2025 and December 2025 at various locations across the Shepton area. The programme brought residents, parish and town councils, community organisations, voluntary sector partners and agencies together to explore local health and wellbeing issues and identify community-led responses.

The programme used facilitated discussion, root-cause analysis and asset mapping to move beyond symptoms and consider underlying drivers of health and wellbeing inequalities. Themes identified across the Shepton area included transport and connectivity, access to GP and dental care, system navigation, loneliness and isolation, carers, volunteer fatigue, community capacity, housing, income and employment pressures.

Learning from Community Solution Seekers aligned strongly with existing LCN priorities, particularly community transport, partnership working and prevention. Interim learning is expected to be mapped into LCN workstreams and neighbourhood partnership discussions, with future potential for online daytime Health and Wellbeing Partnership meetings and marketplace-style engagement events.

Shepton LCN strengthened links between workstreams and wider neighbourhood discussions through Connect Somerset and health system partners and used Community Solution Seekers findings to inform ongoing discussions regarding community transport, prevention and future neighbourhood partnership working

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Children and Young People

Children and young people emerged through several strands of work, including SALC health and wellbeing discussions, youth needs research, Community Solution Seekers and parish engagement. The LCN has recognised that transport barriers, access to activities, social connection and service access can have a significant impact on young people in Shepton Mallet and surrounding villages.

The report was commissioned for the Shepton Mallet LCN area and gathered views from young people across the town and surrounding villages through schools, youth groups, community organisations and partner agencies. The consultation engaged 1,791 participants, including 1,660 young people, and involved 104 organisations.

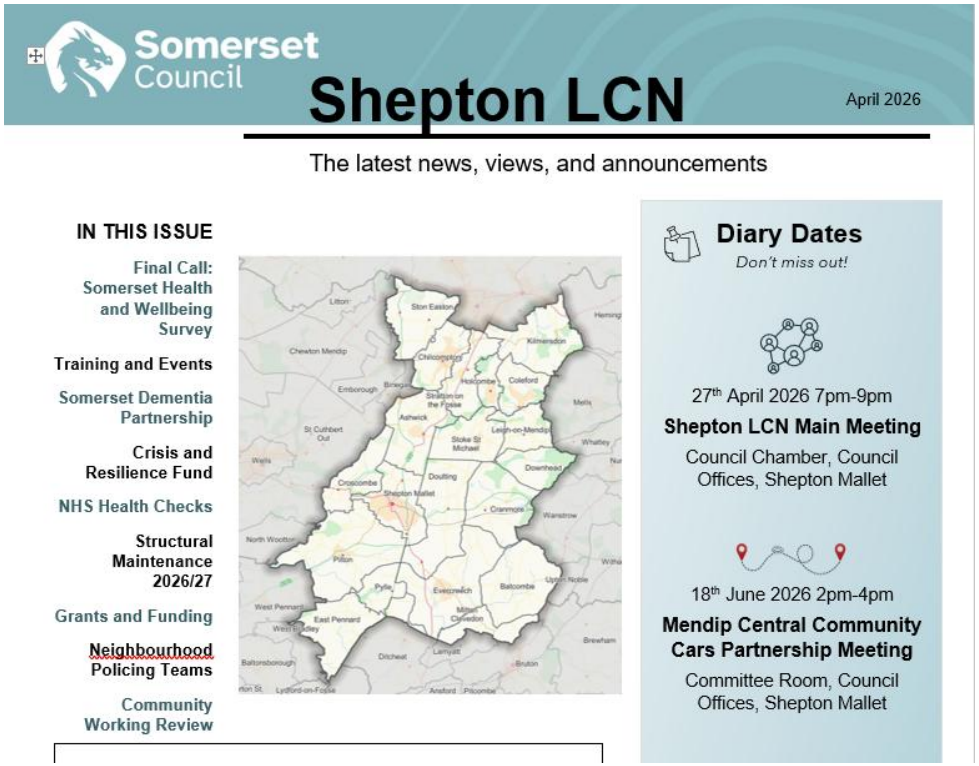
The LCN is described as already having a strong network of organisations, schools, volunteers and community groups working with young people. The report identifies significant partnership opportunities across youth, health, education, sport, culture and community sectors.

The report suggests that Shepton LCN should prioritise creating more opportunities for teenagers, improving transport and safety, strengthening youth voice, supporting young people's wellbeing, and coordinating partners to deliver accessible, affordable and youth-led activities across the area.

Recommendations of the report and insight gathered from wider community involvement will influence priorities and areas of focus for the year ahead.

Communication and Partnership Working

A key area of development has been improving regular communication with LCN members and partners.



Somerset Council

Shepton LCN

April 2026

The latest news, views, and announcements

IN THIS ISSUE

Final Call: Somerset Health and Wellbeing Survey

Training and Events

Somerset Dementia Partnership

Crisis and Resilience Fund

NHS Health Checks

Structural Maintenance 2026/27

Grants and Funding

Neighbourhood Policing Teams

Community Working Review

Diary Dates

Don't miss out!

27th April 2026 7pm-9pm

Shepton LCN Main Meeting

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet

18th June 2026 2pm-4pm

Mendip Central Community Cars Partnership Meeting

Committee Room, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet

A Shepton LCN newsletter was developed and launched in April 2026 to provide a clear, accessible route for sharing LCN dates, training opportunities, partner updates, neighbourhood policing information, highways information, grants and funding, and wider council and community updates.

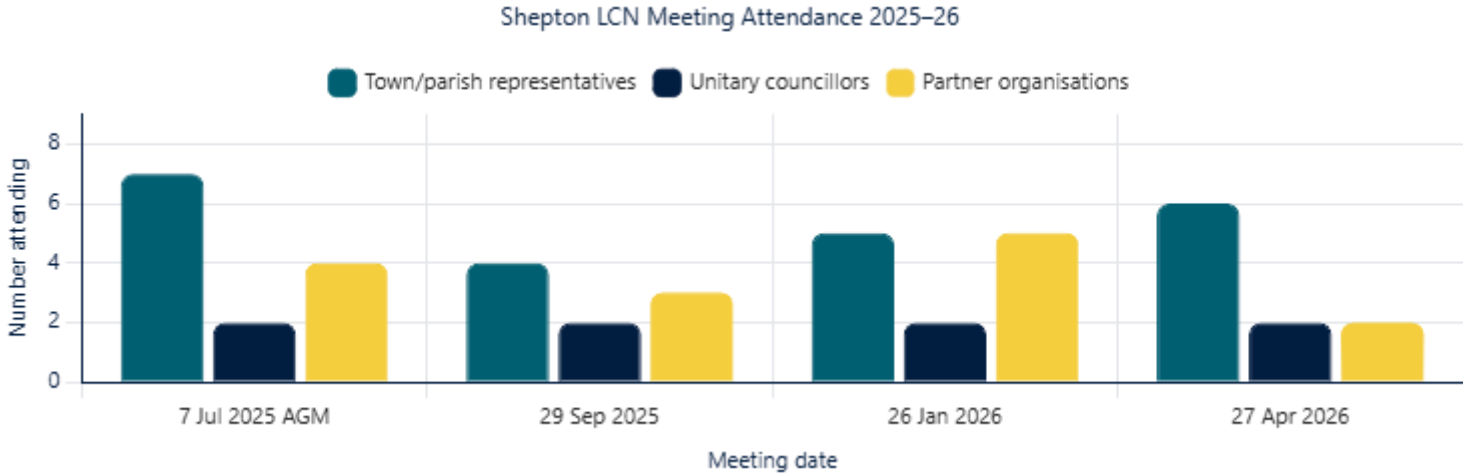
The LCN has also worked to connect local issues with wider council and partner systems, including Connect Somerset, Somerset Association of Local Councils, Thrive, Spark Somerset, Health Connections, community transport providers, statutory partners and relevant Somerset Council teams. Across the year, the LCN's strongest role has been as a connector, convenor and conduit for local voice.

Shepton LCN used main meetings, working groups, neighbourhood meetings and project forums to connect local priorities with wider Somerset Council and partners programmes, supporting effective partnership development across transport, highways, health and youth-related workstreams.

Shepton LCN Meetings

Attendance data shows consistent representation from town and parish councils across the 2025–26 Shepton LCN meeting cycle, with the highest town/parish attendance recorded at the July 2025 AGM. Unitary councillor attendance remained steady across all four recorded meetings, while partner organisation attendance varied depending on meeting focus and agenda.

Shepton LCN Meetings are generally held at Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT



The work of Shepton LCN extends beyond main meetings, in Highways and Traffic Working Group and in projects such as Safer Roads for HGVs, Community Solution Seekers and the Youth Report. Representatives from the following parishes and town have been involved in the work across the LCN: Ashwick, Batcombe, Coleford, Croscombe, Ditcheat, Doulting, Evercreech, Holcombe, Leigh-on-Mendip, Pilton, Shepton Mallet and Stoke St Michael.

Looking forward - the year ahead

In 2026-2027 Shepton LCN will look to build on the work already started and focus on converting partnership foundations into clear, manageable delivery plans.

Thank You and Contacts

Thank you to all town and parish councillors, clerks, Somerset Council officers, community partners, voluntary sector organisations, businesses and residents who contributed to Shepton LCN during 2025–2026.

The year has shown the value of local knowledge, constructive challenge and partnership working in shaping practical responses to complex local issues.

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Website: https://lcn.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/local-community-network-areas/shepton/