

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Shepton

Date: Monday, 31 July 2023

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.30 pm

Location: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet BA4 5BT

Chaired by: Councillor Philip Ham

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Barry Clarke	Somerset Council
Philip Ham	Somerset Council
Edric Hobbs	Somerset Council
Martin Lovell	Somerset Council
Claire Sully	Somerset Council
J Cox	Batcombe Parish Council
C Pearce & A Townsend	Coleford Parish Council
J Parham & R Reed	Evercreech Parish Council
S Brand	Holcombe Parish Council
A Cook & N Ham	Kilmersdon Parish Council
V Taylor & M Carter	Leigh on Mendip Parish Council
N Hall, T Hollings, J Boucher, A Shaw	Pilton Parish Council

G Kennedy, J Nicklin & B Stokes-Stephens

Shepton Mallet Town Council

K Hambly & S Collins

Stoke St Michael Parish Council

T Killen

Ston Easton Parish Council

Officer attendance:

Name:

Representing

Ally Laing

Somerset Council

Dawn Rogers

Somerset Council

Kate Hellard

Somerset Council

Sara Skirton

Somerset Council

Helen Bowen

Somerset Council

Jeff Brown

Somerset Council

Frances Gully

Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:

Representing

Amanda Ware

Avon & Somerset Police

Ann Diment

SALC (Somerset Assoc. of Local Councils)

Hannah Snowden

Spark Somerset

Tim O'Connor

Literally Shepton CIC

Val Keitch

Somerset Council

Apologies:

Name:

Representing

Bente Height

Somerset Council

Tony Robbins

Somerset Council

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 Claire Sully was nominated by Cllr Martin Lovell and seconded by Cllr Tom Hollings from Pilton Parish Council.

Shepton Mallet Town Cllr Garfield Kennedy was nominated by Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs. There was no seconder.

Somerset Cllr Philip Ham was nominated by Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke and seconded by Leigh on Mendip Parish Councillor Vicki Taylor.

Both nominees were given the opportunity to address the Shepton LCN meeting to give reasons why they should be elected as Chair. On being put to the vote, there were 5 votes for Cllr Sully and 9 votes for Cllr Ham.

Cllr Philip Ham was duly elected as Chair of the Shepton Local Community Network.

Cllr Ham thanked the meeting for their vote of confidence and said he would do his very best to make the Shepton LCN a success.

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

Somerset Cllr Claire Sully was nominated by Somerset Cllr Martin Lovell and seconded by Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs.

No other nominations were received and Cllr Claire Sully was duly elected as Vice-Chair of the Shepton Local Community Network.

Item 3: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Somerset

Councillors Bente Height and Tony Robbins, and Parish Councillors Riley and Sumner.

Item 4: **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

Item 5: **Public Question Time**

No public questions or statements were made.

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

Item 6a: **What are LCNs and how will we work together**

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

Cllrs Barry Clarke and Vicki Taylor had questions about support and funding for the LCN. The LCN Development Lead advised that link officers would ideally be located within the community and would have a physical presence. They would attend the LCNs and participate in working groups. Funding would come from a number of different sources.

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

Item 6b: **Discussion - What is important to residents and businesses in our area? An opportunity to raise any local issues or concerns for LCN to consider**

During the group discussions the Local Community Network (LCN) members were asked to consider the following:

1. What topics are important to our residents?
 - 1.1. How do we know?
 - 1.2. What data/evidence/information would help?

2. What could be done to solve/improve topics?
 - 2.1. Are there local examples already working?
3. Who do we need to involve?
 - 3.1. Who else could be in the room (partners and stakeholders)?

1 The following were highlighted as important topics for the Shepton LCN area:

Travel

- The amount and speed of traffic through the villages.
- Access to and frequency of public transport.
- Notifications of Road Closures.
- Inaccurate SatNav directions.
- Bus service is unreliable.
- Buses are old/decrepit.
- Bus service is disconnected to other services.
- Unbalanced parking charges in Shepton.

Highways

- The state of the minor roads particularly potholes.
- The state of the A361.
- Speeding in Pilton & Evercreech.
- Speed restrictions at Pecking Mill.
- Speed signage issues.
- Road maintenance eg. Drain clearance.
- Winter accessibility of Batcombe – no gritters.
- HGVs travelling on unsuitable rural roads – Stoke St Michael.
- Parking in Coleford.

Planning and Planning Enforcement

- Notifications of Planning applications.
- Influence of Parish Councils views on the decisions made.
- Planning policy assistance for businesses.
- Planning enforcement is not working.
- Planning policy including affordable housing.
- Lack of a local plan – parishes are on the back foot.

Environment and Climate Change

- Sustainability.

- Condition of hedges
- Biodiversity.

Public Safety

- Policing presence in rural communities currently lacking.
- Fear of crime.
- Anti-social behaviour.

Housing

- Affordable housing.
- Need real Council homes for local people.

Commerce

- Support of rural businesses.
- Less bureaucracy.
- Increase awareness of opportunities and grants available.
- Business rates are too high – what do we get for it?
- Planning policy assistance for businesses.

Other

- More resources needed to help residents re-enter the workforce so that funding can be re-deployed. Skate/BMX Park facilities – Evercreech.
- Access to health services.
- Transport for young people.
- Lack of a leisure centre and medium sized event centre – Shepton Mallet.

2 Ideas for improving/solving the local issues included:

- Better communication between Somerset Council and Parishes.
- Rural communities to have more voice at Somerset Council – “There is more to Somerset than Taunton”.
- Co-ordinated speed restriction plan across the LCN to save costs and duplication.
- Road maintenance levels provided by Somerset Council to be communicated to Parish Councils so they can make provisions accordingly in their own budget.
- Share the work that Parish Clerks are doing to assist workload and not cause increased workload due to LCNs.

- More local control of 20mph speed limits, funding from SC Highways, not parishes.
- Improve safety (traffic lights?) on A37 Old Wells Road, Beacon crossroads and Pecking Mill.
- Stronger planning power for Parishes – influence on decisions.
- More MUPs (Multiple User Paths) eg. From Shepton to Glastonbury Festival, to Evercreech and to Bath and West Showground.
- Use CPO to complete the Strawberry Line and Somerset Circle.
- Raise the aspirations of the youth.
- Free bus transport for 6th form pupils (to Strode College for example).
- Transfer of assets from Somerset Council to Parish/Town Councils as better managed locally.
- Reduce impact on environment and climate change. Many rural properties have to use oil with no access to gas or more sustainable energy sources.

3 Who do we need to involve:

- Avon and Somerset Police.
- Somerset Council Highways (Steve Palmer, Sara Davis).
- Planning Officers.
- Grants Officers.
- Local Businesses.
- NFU (National Farmers Union).
- Quarries Liaison.
- Speedwatch.
- Bus Group.
- Young People.
- Neighbouring LCNs.
- Young Farmers.

When asked to identify the two main areas of concern from their lists, the results for the discussion groups were as follows:

- Co-ordinated speed restrictions.
- What will the LCN do to help business – eg influence a cut of business rates?
- Condition and safety of roads.

- Planning Policy and assistance to speed this up to develop business.
- Very dangerous road junctions. Need to be dealt with urgently.
- 2nd homeowners don't pay as much tax – seems unfair as they still use the services.
- Lack of a leisure centre and medium sized events places

The LCN Development Lead asked the group if there were any further comments. These included:

- The LCN meetings should not just be tick-box exercises. There needs to be workstreams with action points and performance monitoring. Kate Hellard - LCN Development Lead - confirmed that there would be.
- What funding is available for LCNs and will they be linked? Sara Skirton – Service Director for Partnerships & Localities - advised that there was the intention to link LCNs together, particularly where there were similar priorities. There was no specific delivery budget, the , but funding can be sourced , however, once the priorities had been determined and the evidence checked and challenged, it is intended that the action plans would be reported to the executive committee to be considered by Somerset Council.
- Will the transfer of assets still be considered? The Chair, Cllr Philip Ham, advised that this would not happen quickly as would have to go through the Scrutiny process, but it was in the pipeline.
- The name of the LCN was raised as not being representative of the rural communities within the Shepton LCN and there was a suggestion to change it to Shepton and Rural LCN. The Chair asked for the name of the Shepton LCN to be considered as an agenda item.
- It was hoped that by being part of this LCN the rural parishes would be assisted during difficult times, such as adverse winter weather.

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

The Shepton LCN agreed that the frequency of meetings should be bi-monthly for a main meeting and for working groups to

meet in between the main meetings. It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for October 2023.

It was highlighted that the terms of reference were in the LCN handbook located on the Somerset Council website.

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

This was to be determined.

At the completion of the meeting, Cllr Val Keitch – Associate Lead Member for Localities and Public Health – thanked everyone for attending. She said it was very heartening to see Parish, Town and City Councils taking the LCN seriously and engaging with the new Somerset Council.

The meeting finished at 8.30 pm.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcnsomerset@somerset.gov.uk

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcnsomerset@somerset.gov.uk