

DOWSBOROUGH LCN – HIGHWAYS WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 27th January 2026, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm

Online

Meeting Notes

Attendance

Cllr Mike Caswell (Chair)	Richard Hubbard, Wembdon PC
Katherine Tyson, Somerset Council	Caro Slaymaker, Nether Stowey PC
Sue Goss, Stogursey PC	John McVerry, Stockland Bristol PM
Karen Scott, Holford & Kilve PC	Sam Tyson, Forestry England
Richard Curtis, Over Stowey PC	Tara Maxamed, Forestry England
Paul King, Wembdon PC	Anne Shilton, LCN Link Officer

Apologies

Simon Stretton, Spaxton PC	Lorraine Warren, Kier.
Sue Felstead.	John Addison, Cannington PC.
Bev Norman, Lawrence Hackling, George Simmons, Jeremy Fry, Gwyn Hughes, Chris Jones SC officers	Cllr Rosemary Wood Cllr Hugh Davies

1. Welcome and introductions

Meeting was moved from in person to online at short notice due to storms and flooding hindering travel. Most highways officers were attending emergency highways situations across the county. M Caswell chaired the meeting by default as C Morgan could not join due to technical issues. Number of apologies due to highways officers being involved with emergency response to current Storm weather.

1a. Brief introduction from Forestry England, attending for the first time.

Sam Tyson (Beat Forester) and Tara Maxamed (Community Ranger) introduced themselves and explained that Forestry England is the practical land management branch of the Forestry Commission. They manage the public forest estate including Quantocks and Exmoor. Their model is standing sales – they own the trees, customers fell and extract them which limits their control over haulage routes and traffic impacts. They maintain woodland that often borders or crosses public roads

so they aim to resolve issues like fallen limbs promptly. Woodland provides natural drainage benefits by intercepting water before it hits the road network. Forestry England wish to build stronger links with the LCN to improve communication with the local area around planned works.

The area well known as Great Wood is due for a major contract later this year; expected to last six months with high lorry movement and FE would like local people to be aware of this. Tara handles communications with parish councils, including extraction routes, temporary road closures and manages public expectations/ complaints. Both Tara and Sam were invited back to present their work and the project at Great Wood at another LCN meeting, probably at the AGM in June 2026.

Concern was raised about the Plainsfield/Adscombe junction as the white lines at the junction had degraded resulting in unclear priority and some vehicles not stopping at the junction. The responsibility for white lining within public highway lies with Somerset Council and this would be taken back for consideration for later in the year when this task resumed. The link on the website to report any junction lining refurbishment is [Report a problem on the road](#) .

The adjacent potholes on the forestry track are the responsibility of Forestry England, who reported having a crew on site to repair them that day.

2. Notes from previous meeting, September 2025 (previously circulated) to be agreed.

Please note that in the September '25 notes and actions, it should read Perry Green and not Berry Green. Notes agreed.

3. Matters arising and actions from previous meeting (See updated action log below)

Biffin's Corner

Accident recently caused damage to fingerpost, telecom cabinet, and resulted in a dog fatality. Due to a recent accident at Biffins corner the fingerpost sign has been damaged, could it be confirmed that this will be renewed/repaired?

Responsibility for bollards

S Goss enquired about the responsibility for 2 bollards knocked down in an accident on the C182 near Shurton and at the same time, a finger post and road sign, which she had reported on 12/12/25 but had not been cleared. K Tyson had not seen the report and asked S Goss to resubmit it at

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

so that she could review the details and respond.

S Goss and P Kiing enquired about the ongoing uncertainty about who funds bollard placements under the “enhanced highways maintenance scheme.” There is no decision yet from Somerset Council about the EHMS and Director Mike O’Dowd-Jones will email all parishes, usually via the LCN, once scheme is finalised.

Finger Posts

Generally finger posts are the responsibility of the Parish Council but there may be some grant funding from Exmoor National Park or possibly from EDF/HPC. The damage had been done by AIS vehicles. There are at times, grants available to help with the West Heritage Trust local trail or the South West Heritage Trust. C Slaymaker reported a high repair cost of approximately £5,000. Moving a fingerpost that is obstructing visibility can be done by the parish council but requires using a recommended contractor who has a Section 171 licence which is needed if works are on public highway.

Wembdon drainage / gulleys

Farmer has replaced his own pipework up to attenuation tank. Still flooding due to a blocked highway drain.

Operation Harald (signage and lining)

K Tyson confirmed that all signs and lines were checked and corrected and that all expected signage now in place, with nothing outstanding.

S Goss confirmed improvements are working well and had made the situation safer.

One remaining issue: ongoing leak of spring water between Burton and Steart Road. K Tyson explained she would pass this onto C Jones.

Nether Stowey culvert

No update available due to lack of Highways officer presence.

4. Highways Concerns previously submitted

Wembdon: Is Waldrons Lane Perry Green on the list for resurfacing and when?

Road has been closed since 2023 and only serves two endpoints (dog club and a fishery). The estimated cost of works is £250,000 so unlikely to be on resurfacing list in the near future. Parish council are doubtful about value for money; this query was included on agenda at a resident request.

Otterhampton:

- a) Over the Christmas period there were a number of accidents just outside the village of Comwich, resulting in injury and sadly the death of a pet dog. The C182 appears to have a large number of accidents; what are the Council doing to monitor this and do they have any plans in place to prevent any further accidents happening?

This would be carried over to the next meeting.

- b) The speed of vehicles along the C182, particularly along Dame Withycombe Hill has been of concern for sometime by the Councillors and parishioners. This has an impact on vehicles turning in and out of the village along with the residents who live in Dame Withycombe villas, many of whom are elderly, as they are literally taking their life into their own hands trying to cross the road to get into their village. Would the Council consider putting speed reduction measures in place?

This would be carried over to the next meeting.

- c) Some of the Councillors are keen to introduce a 20mph within the village. K Tyson explained that the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit is at the cost of the parish council. A request for the new limit, with evidence of need, should be submitted to the traffic management team who would then review the request. It should be noted that not all requests were agreed.

5. Update from Highways Officers – significant work plans for coming year in the Dowsborough area and also into Bridgwater.

Due to the absence of highways officers as emergency situation been announced as a result of Storm Chandra, this item was not addressed and will defer to the next meeting.

6. Any other business

Stockland Bristol – Severe highways deterioration

Strongly expressed concerns by J McVerry and M Caswell:

Current problems include:

Biffin's Corner to Otterhampton Road: closed 5 days for Wessex Water but the signage and advance information were inconsistent.

Top road surface: "like a ploughed field" due to heavy agricultural traffic.

Residents placing traffic cones in potholes to prevent damage, sometimes without due regard to safety. As a result, there is serious risk of vehicle damage and access disruption.

There is a serious risk of flooding due to drainage failures not resolved despite promised works 3 years ago.

The local community is taking their own actions such as clearing gullies manually, but this is not sustainable and unsafe. The community feels severely neglected and forgotten despite numerous requests for help. K Tyson advised that they should continue reporting all safety issues and other highways issues at all times and follow them up with the allocated reference numbers.

Budget & strategic concerns

P King questioned whether poor maintenance causing flooding is due to Highways' own making.

K Tyson replied that budgets are tight and cut annually, with more roads built, but not more funding for maintenance. The drainage and maintenance backlog is a national issue, not just within Somerset.

Sea Lane TTRO confusion

K Scott enquired about the TTRO for wall repairs planned for 12–26 Jan 2026. The work didn't start until the 19th Jan but a TTRO extension issued incorrectly adding a week at the start of the closure period (5 Jan), causing confusion despite trying to reach Streetworks team by phone or email and being unable to gain a response.

K Tyson suggested using the email addresses provided correct inboxes which are regularly monitored:

- highways-west@somerset.gov.uk
- streetworks@somerset.gov.uk

It should be noted that personal email addresses can often result in a delay in response if that person were out of office as they are not regularly monitored. Once an issue has been reported, a reference number will be assigned which can then be used to follow up an issue in future.

Public Information Portal / Reporting Overlaps

J McVerry asked if there was a way to see what has been reported to avoid duplication.

K Tyson explained that the public portal shows future programmed works, not safety defects. Safety reports generate reference numbers and can be tracked individually. A monthly “completed works” report is sent to county councillors; Cllr M Caswell receives some but not all and could forward these on to J McVerry. K Tyson to ensure M Caswell is on the list to receive all of the reports.

Volunteer liability for drain clearing

J McVerry raised significant concern about volunteers clearing gullies legally and their personal liability if working without permissions from Somerset Council. K Tyson was unable to provide a definitive legal answer.

Pedestrian crossing safety – A39 Nether Stowey

C Slaymaker is awaiting response to the request for a warning sign for pedestrians crossing over the A39 at Nether Stowey. K Tyson committed to following up.

Water Lane, Holford – persistent flooding

R Curtis (Over Stowey) raised concerns about flooding since November 2025. Jetting had been attempted but was insufficient due to the volume of water. He requested feedback on whether drains are collapsed/blocked by roots. He also raised a query about whether parish volunteers can dig out 20m stretch of drain. K Tyson suggested that he contacted Chris Jones, Assistant Area Highways Manager in the Highways team at highways-west@somerset.gov.uk

7. Date, time and venue of next meeting;

Due to absence of Highways officers and worsening roads, the group supported holding an earlier additional meeting on **Tuesday 10th March 2026, 10.00 – 12.00** at the youth club building next to the Victor Hall in Stogursey.

Action plan

Action	responsibility	update
Forestry England present plans for coming year, esp for Great Wood, to wider LCN meeting	Forestry England / Link Officer to discuss	Likely to present at AGM in June 2026

Plainsfield/Adscombe junction white lining needed.	SC Highways to action later in year when white lining possible and within capacity	
Finger post at Biffens Corner needs replacement, following RTC on C182 near Shurton. Also replacement bollards	S Goss to resubmit report for K Tyson to SC review incident. Awaiting EHMS information from M O'Dowd.	
Ongoing leak of spring water between Burton and Steart Road.	K Tyson to pass information to C Jones	
Nether Stowey culvert	Highways officers	Ongoing to next meeting
Combwich – high number of incidents – query about monitoring and future action	Highways officers	Ongoing to next meeting
Combwich C182 – SC to consider speed reduction measures	Highways officers	Ongoing to next meeting
Otterhampton reduction to 20 mph	Otterhampton PC to gain evidence and present to SC for decision. PC to decide whether to go ahead or not.	
Significant work plans for coming year in the Dowsborough area and also into Bridgwater	Highways officers to collate and bring to next meeting	Ongoing
Stockland Bristol – Severe highways deterioration	Details to be reported via usual portal	
Sea Lane TTRO confusion	K Scott to report event using usual portal	
Monthly compltred works email to M Caswell	K Tyson to ensure M Caswell receives monthly updates of highways works	

<p>N Stowey - awaiting response to the request for a warning sign for pedestrians crossing over the A39 K Tyson committed to following up</p>	<p>K Tyson to follow up</p>	
<p>Over Stowey concerns about (a) flooding since November 2025. Requested feedback on whether drains are collapsed/blocked by roots. (b) Query about whether parish volunteers can dig out 20m stretch of drain.</p>	<p>R Curtis to contact C Jones, highways-west@somerset.gov.uk with queries</p>	
<p>Next meeting – 10th March 2026. 10 – 12 noon.</p>	<p>S Goss to book Youth Club building at Stogursey Victory Hall and confirm to Link Officer</p>	