

# North Somerset Village Voices: Continuing Engagement With Rural Communities

December 2016

(A Continuation of Village Voices October 2016)



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## Introduction

Healthwatch North Somerset collects information from the public about their experiences of local health and social care services. We call this information 'Intelligence'. Intelligence is gathered through a wide range of methods including letters, website, emails, surveys, telephone calls, meetings, social media, Enter and View visits, talking face to face and from partner organisations. We listen to patient experiences, base our work on them and inform commissioners and providers about good practice and areas for service improvement.

We also gather information on specific issues through surveys, meetings or by working with a specific group of people. Healthwatch North Somerset takes great care to treat all information objectively.

Once gathered, the intelligence is collated onto our information database, we analyse the data each month to ascertain trends. This information is shared with health and social care service providers, local commissioners and all other relevant bodies. All intelligence is shared with Healthwatch England.

Healthwatch North Somerset would like to thank to everyone who contributed and provided information for this report.

## About Healthwatch North Somerset

Healthwatch North Somerset's statutory duty and remit, which is laid out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012, is to provide a voice for people who use health and adult social care services, by:

### Influencing

- Giving people an opportunity to have a say about their local health and social care services, including those whose voice isn't usually heard.
- Taking public views to the people who make decisions - including having a representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Feeding issues back to government via Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

## Signposting

- Providing information about health and social care services in the local area. Advising people on where to go for specialist help or information (signposting).
- Helping people make choices and decisions about their care.
- Working closely with other groups and organisations in the local area.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012) Healthwatch North Somerset has the following powers and functions:

- A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to requests of information within 20 working days.
- A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to recommendations made by Healthwatch North Somerset within 20 working days.
- Make reports and recommendations about services known to commissioners, providers and regulators of health and social care services in North Somerset
- A duty on service providers to allow entry to authorised Healthwatch North Somerset members to conduct announced or unannounced ‘enter and view’ visits to assess services.
- A seat on North Somerset’s Health and Wellbeing Board (People and Communities Board), to promote health improvements and tackle health inequalities.
- A mechanism to make recommendations to Healthwatch England, which may include advising the Care Quality Commission about special reviews or investigations to conduct.

## Our Mission:

By offering all people of North Somerset a strong voice we will improve the quality of local health and social care today and for the future.



## Summary of Findings

Throughout November and December 2016 a number of the more rural locations in North Somerset were visited or contacted to create key links and identify ‘Healthwatch Champions’ in these localities. These are described as local people who would be willing to keep in touch with the Healthwatch North Somerset team on a regular basis and offer feedback on the health and social care experiences of people in their communities.

This report details the results of those visits and communications.

*Note:*

*In hindsight, the timing of the project made connecting with local people in rural communities a little more difficult.*

*Most groups occurred on a monthly basis, which meant that by the time the group was identified as an appropriate collective to visit, their next meeting was scheduled for shortly before Christmas. It then felt inappropriate to attend due to many of them having arranged Christmas parties and other seasonal celebrations as a change to their usual format.*

## Background

This report is the culmination of a time limited piece of work to build on the previous ‘Village Voices’ report (October 2016) which sought to seek to access and promote Healthwatch North Somerset in areas that are more difficult to engage with and to access.

Healthwatch North Somerset would like to ensure that the voice of people in rural communities is heard. With this aim they commissioned a freelance engagement worker to visit a selection of rural locations which Healthwatch North Somerset has identified as having little or no visibility across the county and identify key individuals that would be willing to stay in contact with the Healthwatch North Somerset team on a regular basis.

This report provides an overview of the project and offers both quantitative and qualitative information on the outcomes of the project.



## Aims and Objectives

The aim of this engagement project was to report the views and opinions of the rural population in the South and East of North Somerset. The process of seeking out experiences of Health and Social Care services had two main objectives - to find out where services may be good and receive positive recognition and to identify where services are not meeting needs and require improvement.

The engagement activities undertaken provided opportunities for people in rural areas to articulate whether living in a rural area has an impact on their health and wellbeing.

While collecting this feedback time was also taken to develop links with key partners in rural areas, establish relationships with leaders of groups and activities and access some of the harder to reach residents in these communities.

## Methods

Initially an internet search of rural village parish council websites and local community groups was carried out to identify potential hot spots for community activity.

Current editions of local magazines, including the Mendip Times and the North Somerset Council Focus, were referred to in order to identify any appropriate groups mentioned in their 'Clubs and Societies' or 'Events' listings.

Initially a small number of specific rural communities were identified, in particular those that were most rural and located furthest away from larger villages and towns.

Emails addresses and contact details were gathered from public resources and were used to seek to establish initial contact. Effective communication through email and by phone proved to be difficult and little response to communication attempts indicated that a wider, more general approach might be more effective and appropriate.

Email was used as the main method of communication throughout the project and it was felt that this was appropriate in cases where an email address was provided on a website. Mixed Responses were received from parish councils and community hubs. Some responded positively and advised that they would put details of Healthwatch North Somerset in their parish magazines, others provided contact details for people that could potentially help, while some did not respond at all.

In many cases an email address was not provided on a website, but rather a 'Contact Us' button was available and directed to a text box in which to enter your query. The downside to this is that it is not possible to send attachments with a message and the message box was not large enough for a full email. Given more time, this issue could obviously be overcome by sending information via the postal system.

Village Agents who covered some of the key areas identified as potentially important locations for this project were contacted and two meetings took place.

A poster was produced to ignite interest and encourage contact - this was emailed out to a variety of local groups and establishments.

Contact was made with 60 individuals, groups or establishments - these are listed in Appendix 4. Depending upon the recipient and whether they could receive email communications, many were also sent a poster and asked if they could display it in a position where members of their local community may see it.

A Thank You email was sent following each response received.



## Findings

Contact was made with individuals, groups or establishments in the following rural areas:

 Abbots Leigh	 Locking
 Barrow Gurney	 Loxton and Christon
 Bleadon	 Pill
 Clapton in Gordano	 Portbury
 Claverham	 Redhill
 Cleeve	 Regil
 Congresbury	 Shipham
 Dundry	 Tickenham
 Easton in Gordano	 Uphill
 Failand	 Weston in Gordano
 Felton	 Walton in Gordano
 Flax Bourton	 Wick St Lawrence
 Hutton	 Winford
 Kenn	 Winscombe
 Kewstoke	 Wraxall
 Kingston Seymour	 Yatton
 Leigh Woods	



Of the 60 individuals, groups or establishments contacted, a total of 19 positive responses were received from the groups or organisations to provide information about Healthwatch North Somerset, amounting to a 30% success rate.

Abbots Leigh Parish Magazine
Abbots Leigh Resilience Campaigner
Claverham Village Hall
Flax Bourton Village Hall
Hutton Parish Council - Hutton News
Kewstoke Church of St Paul
Kingston Seymour Post Office
Kingston Seymour Parish Magazine
Pill and Easton in Gordano Parish Website
Redhill Coffee Morning
Regil Church
Tickenham Parish Council
Uphill Church
Walton in Gordano Parish Council
Weston in Gordano Parish Council
Winford
Wraxall Village Hall
Yatton Village Hall

Additional contacts were made with

- 🌸 Village Agent - Tina Huckle
- 🌸 Village Agent - Sarah Friend
- 🌸 Senior Community Links - June Chainey

Most of the rural village residents encountered during this engagement project had little or no prior knowledge of Healthwatch North Somerset or its function. Two people said that they had heard of Healthwatch North Somerset but did not understand its remit.

Five individuals were identified to become local 'Champions'. Their preferred contact method was established and their contact details taken and passed on to Healthwatch North Somerset for further communication and development of the relationship. These five people were identified at two events suggesting that recruitment of more 'Champions' could be relatively easy once face-to-face contact is achieved.

The following were contacted and details about Healthwatch North Somerset were forwarded by email.

Abbots Leigh Civic Society  
Barrow Gurney Blessed Virgin Mary  
Barrow Gurney Parish E-Group  
Barrow Gurney Village Hall  
Bleadon Church of St Peter and St Paul  
Bleadon Coronation Hall  
Clapton in Gordano Black Horse  
Cleeve Parish Council  
Cleeve Holy Trinity Church  
Congresbury Community Transport  
Congresbury Library  
Dundry  
Easton in Gordano Parish  
Failand Art Club  
Failand Society

Felton Village Hall  
Flax Bourton Cricket Club  
Flax Bourton Parish Council  
Hutton and Locking Churches  
Hutton Village Hall  
Kenn Parish Council  
Kewstoke Parish Council  
Leigh Woods Time Out Group  
Locking Parish Council  
Locking St Augustines  
Loxton Parish Council  
Loxton and Christon Blessed Virgin Mary  
Pill / Portbury / Easton in Gordano Churches  
Pill History Society  
Pill Library  
Portbury Village Hall  
Shipham Village Hall  
Uphill St Nicholas Church  
Walton in Gordano Church  
Wick St Lawrence Church  
Weston in Gordano Church  
Wick St Lawrence Village Hall  
Wraxall/Failand Parish  
Yatton Library

## Intelligence received

A total of 13 pieces of intelligence were collected during the project, a mix of both positive and negative comments. Appendix 5 summarises the intelligence collected. This intelligence was passed to the Healthwatch North Somerset team.

## Reflections

Difficulties were experienced in accessing / reaching people in the rural communities, this is likely to be a barrier to organisations or individuals across the board. This is both concerning for the rural communities who may benefit from services that they are potentially unaware of or unable to access, and frustrating from the point of view of those trying to reach them.

Parish council websites were in some cases a great source of information about the local community that they served, but the usefulness and user-friendliness of the sites for those external to the community differed enormously across the region.

Community halls are often a hub for local people and several were contacted in an attempt to reach clusters of people in rural communities. Most are used regularly by local people attending various recreational clubs or groups but more often than not the contact details for the group organisers are not available.

It seems that, as a resident of a rural village, once they're 'in the know' help and support can be accessed, but getting to that point can be difficult and is dependent upon the individual village. This difficulty is replicated for organisations seeking to make contact.

Church networks are a good key link for rural areas although the associated age demographic may prove to be quite narrow.

## Recommendations

1. To keep in regular contact with the identified 'Champions' to ensure they feel valued and part of the Healthwatch North Somerset community.
2. To develop ongoing and closer relationships with parish councils in order to access rural community hubs more effectively. This could perhaps be in the form of a specific parish council engagement event.
3. Identify and engage with church coffee mornings and lunch clubs.

## Appendix 1 - Acknowledgements

- 🌱 Catherine Dixon - Weston in Gordano Parish Council
- 🌱 Donald (Surname Unknown) Pill/Portbury/Easton in Gordano Parish Magazine
- 🌱 Gill Ogden - Time Out Group Abbots Leigh
- 🌱 Hilary Vowles - Redhill Resident
- 🌱 John Allday - Postmaster for Kingston Seymour
- 🌱 John Harris - Kingston Seymour Resident
- 🌱 Marian Grimes - Redhill Resident
- 🌱 Mark Grayson - Resilience Campaigner Abbots Leigh
- 🌱 Mary Douglas-Jones - Winford Resident
- 🌱 Reverend Andrew Hemming - Christ Church Redhill
- 🌱 Reverend Paul Stephens - Regil Church
- 🌱 Reverend Geoff Eales - Milton and Kewstoke Church
- 🌱 Rob Richards - Redhill Resident
- 🌱 Rob Waycott - Flax Bourton Village Hall
- 🌱 Sarah Hook - Claverham Village Hall
- 🌱 Sarah Friend - Village Agent
- 🌱 Steve Cope - Hutton Parish Council
- 🌱 Steve Marr - Uphill Church
- 🌱 Sue Lang - Kingston Seymour Resident
- 🌱 Tina Huckle-Mills - Village Agent
- 🌱 Viv French - Yatton Village Hall

## Appendix 2 - Useful Information

- Healthwatch North Somerset Report - Village Voices October 2016

[www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk)

- West of England Rural Network Village Agents

Village Agents are a service offered by the West of England Rural Network (WERN). They link people in rural areas with advice and support services for independent living. This service is available in the rural areas of Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset.

[www.wern.org.uk](http://www.wern.org.uk)

- North Somerset Parish Councils

A comprehensive list of contact details for Parish Council Chairs and Clerks can be found by following the link below:

[www.nsomerset.gov.uk/mycouncil/councillors/townandparish/town-and-parish-contacts/](http://www.nsomerset.gov.uk/mycouncil/councillors/townandparish/town-and-parish-contacts/)

# *Help Us Help You!*

***We're looking for local people to be our eyes and ears on the ground in our rural communities and help us collect views on health and social care experiences.***

*Healthwatch North Somerset will then ensure that the views of the public are fed back to the local commissioners and regulators of those services.*

**We want to make sure that residents of rural villages are heard, so if you are well connected in your village and would be happy to keep in touch with the Healthwatch North Somerset team on a regular basis we'd really like to hear from you.**

This role does not require you to jump through any hoops! No application form, no DBS check, no hassle.

**Call Sophia for an informal chat on 01275 851400 or email [sophia@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk](mailto:sophia@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk)**

## Appendix 4 - Communications

Abbots Leigh Civic Society	No Response
Abbots Leigh Parish Council	Acknowledged
Abbots Leigh	Parish magazine
Barrow Gurney Blessed Virgin Mary	No Response
Barrow Gurney Parish E-Group	No Response
Barrow Gurney Village Hall	No Response
Bleadon Church of St Peter and St Paul	No Response
Bleadon Coronation Hall	No Response
Clapton in Gordano Black Horse	No Response
Claverham Village Hall	Poster
Cleeve Parish Council	No Response
Cleeve Holy Trinity Church	No Response
Congresbury Community Transport	No Response
Congresbury Library	No Response
Dundry	No Response
Easton in Gordano Parish	No Response
Failand Art Club	No Response
Failand Society	No Response
Felton Village Hall	No Response
Flax Bourton Cricket Club	No Response
Flax Bourton Parish Council	No Response
Flax Bourton Village Hall	Poster
Hutton and Locking Churches	No Response
Hutton Parish Council	Hutton News
Hutton Village Hall	No Response
Kenn Parish Council	No Response
Kewstoke Parish Council	No Response
Kewstoke Church of St Paul	Vicar and Churchwardens
Kingston Seymour Post Office	Two contacts made
Kinston Seymour	Parish Magazine
Leigh Woods Time Out Group	No Response
Locking Parish Council	No Response
Locking St Augustines	No Response
Loxton Parish Council	No Response
Loxton and Christon Blessed Virgin Mary	No Response
Pill/Portbury/Easton in Gordano Churches	No Response
Pill and Easton in Gordano Parish Website	Facebook and Parish Magazine
Pill History Society	No Response



Pill Library	No Response
Portbury Village Hall	No Response
Redhill Coffee Morning	Three contacts made
Regil Church	HWNS information provided
Shipham Village Hall	No Response
Tickenham Parish Council	Parish magazine and poster
Uphill Church	Poster
Uphill St Nicholas Church	No Response
Walton / Weston in Gordano Churches	No Response
Walton in Gordano Parish Council	Parish Councillors
Weston in Gordano Parish Council	Poster and Parish newsletter
Wick St Lawrence Church	No Response
Wick St Lawrence Village Hall	No Response
Winford	'Champion' identified
Winscombe Bridge Club	No Response
Winscombe Library	No Response
Winscombe Tennis Club	No Response
Wraxall Village Hall - Mothers Union.	Acknowledged
Wraxall/Failand Parish	No Response
Yatton Library	No Response
Yatton Village Hall	Poster

## Appendix 5 - Intelligence Collected

### Positive Intelligence

Very good service-cataracts. BRI.
Inpatient for five weeks. The service was good but felt BRI were short staffed.
BRI service is 10/10.
GP always takes the time needed.
Surgery is excellent.
Happy with the GP surgery.
Its good that Weston hospital test you for MRSA on admission.
Weston Hospital service was "second to none".
Weston Hospital Uphill and Berrow wards care was excellent.

### Negative Intelligence

Didn't feel that was given the care needed at GP surgery
Should have a bell or buzzer on surgery reception.
The wait to see designated GP can be a long time.
A phlebotomist nurse at the surgery would avoid needing to go to the hospital.

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Healthwatch North Somerset



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