



Somerset Liberal Democrats
Chard South
February 2025



LLOYDS BANK CLOSURE THREATENS LOCAL ACCESS TO CASH AND BANKING SERVICES

Lloyds Bank is set to close its Chard branch on 11th November 2025, leaving our community without dedicated banking services. Despite my concerns, LINK has decided not to recommend a Banking Hub or additional cash services – putting residents, businesses, and vulnerable members of our community at risk of financial exclusion. We need your support to challenge this decision and demand that we get a Banking Hub to maintain vital banking services for our area. Without it, the nearest full banking branch will be 11 miles away in Honiton – taking over 100 minutes by public transport!



WHY WE NEED A BANKING HUB

- *Local businesses rely on cash deposit services.*
- *Elderly and vulnerable residents depend on in-person banking.*
- *Many customers still use branch services despite the rise of online banking.*
- *The alternative cash services are not enough – we need a sustainable solution*

We wish to submit an appeal by Monday 24th February so please respond to us before then. The more signatures and feedback we collect, the stronger our case for securing better banking services for Chard. Sign the petition online at: www.yeovil-libdems.org.uk/save-rural-banking-services

DON'T LOSE ACCESS TO BANKING, Together we can push for a fair solution that supports our local economy and ensures everyone in our community has access to essential banking services.

Government Devolution

We have received the news that Somerset Council, with our partners in Dorset, Wiltshire and Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole will not be part of the priority programme for devolution of government powers to the strategic authority of Wessex. Government recognised ours as a strong expression of interest and we will continue to work together on improving our proposal to ensure that the region gets the investment and resource it needs. While disappointing that we will miss out on the benefits for a year at least, we will continue to advocate for the west country to attract investment and opportunities.

Local Government
Devolution

More Heavy Rain and Flooding

Its fair to say that we have had more than our fair share of heavy down pours and flooding, as many of you will know I was out with the town council operations manager until gone 4am on the day of the flooding trying to assist local residents in any way that we could. We opened the Guildhall as a place of refuge and worked with the civil contingency officer from Somerset Council who was based at the Guildhall to assist and ensure a good flow of local information so that the emergency services could be deployed to where they needed to be. I believe that communication is vital when major Incidents like this happen and would urge everyone to work together and communicate, all to often we see one group or council blaming another and this needs to stop so that our residents can have all councils and voluntary groups working together to bring better outcomes for everyone,



Following the flooding I have been out with Somerset council officers to ensure the clean up is on track and will continue to do this until the job is done. We need answers and solutions to the flooding issues that we are seeing, and we need to learn lessons from previous events. I have had several meetings with key officers and am pleased that our MP has called a public meeting on Thursday 13th February at the Shrubbery Hotel in Ilminster, I urge anyone affected to join him at this meeting where we will be able to discuss what happened and ways forward.

Urban Tree Challenge Fund

The £500,000 grant from the [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#) will see nearly 700 mature trees planted and cover maintenance and care costs for the next 3 years.

Somerset Council's Woodland Creation Team is collaborating with all beneficiaries to ensure the right trees are planted in the right places for the right reasons, with proper aftercare in place. [Councillor Graham Oakes](#), Somerset Council's Lead Member for Public Health, Environment and Climate Change said: We are thrilled to have secured funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund allowing us to plant more trees in urban green spaces across Somerset. This initiative is another step towards enhancing our green spaces and a significant move towards ensuring cleaner air and a healthier environment for our communities. As part of our 10-year [Somerset Tree Strategy](#), we are committed to investing in a greener, more sustainable future for Somerset.

Planting trees within urban green spaces is essential for creating vibrant, diverse, and resilient environments. This project supports the 'future-proofing' of urban green spaces, providing benefits such as urban cooling, increased water absorption, shade provision, improved air quality, and reduced road noise.



Keeping in Contact

**COME AND TALK WITH US
AT A LIB DEM SURGERY**

FIRST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

With your Town and Unitary Councillors

AT THE GUILDHALL, CHARD



10am to 12pm

You can meet with me to discuss any concerns or for help by dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you or feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk