

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 27. Week ending 27/09/20

#Hands

#Face

#Space

SWT Council priorities

Somerset West and Taunton Council's updated priorities during the coronavirus outbreak are as follows:

- Preserve critical services;
- Safeguard the public;
- Ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported; and
- Planning economic resilience and recovery

The situation is being reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that the Council follows the [latest advice from Public Health England](#).

[Click here](#) to read up to date information on how SWT continues to respond to coronavirus.

Key Messages this week

1. Free Trees Offered by SWT

Somerset West and Taunton is offering parish and town councils across the district free trees as part of its commitment to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.

Local councils can order trees, stakes, ties and guards which will be ready for collection in time for National Tree Week from **28 November to 5 December**.

Councils can choose from Oak, Beech, Lime and Hawthorn bare root trees to the value of £50 to be collected from one of three locations across the district - Taunton Deane Nurseries, Wellington Depot or Minehead Depot.

This scheme is funded by the money generated from the ice rink in Taunton last Christmas.

The trees will be ready for collection in the week commencing **23 November**. Further information can be found on the SWT [website](#).

More information about National Tree Week can be found [here](#).

2. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

A number of Committee meetings are scheduled to take place over the next couple of weeks, which are as follows:

- Tuesday 29 September - **Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 24 September) Items on the agenda include Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order, Emergency Town Centre Recovery report, motions relating to supporting the Local Electricity Bill and declaring an Ecological Emergency, and Portfolio Holder Reports
- Wednesday 30 September - **Special Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 25 September). Items on the agenda include Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring as at end July 2020 and in year COVID budget changes, 2019/20 Financial Monitoring Outturn Position and Corporate Performance Report Months 1-4.
- Wednesday 7 October - **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 2 October)
- Thursday 8 October - **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 5 October).

The meetings will all be live streamed so that members of the public can watch at home. To watch the live stream when the meeting commences please visit the SWT website by [clicking here](#). If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

Members of the public are still able to participate in the meeting by submitting their questions or statement to the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk and these will be read out by an officer at the meeting. Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

SWT Councillors are reminded that if they do not wish to receive paper copies of agendas to please let the Governance Team know.

3. Next steps funding for rough sleepers accommodation

SWT has been awarded Government funding to continue providing interim accommodation for rough sleepers during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Council has secured £167,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' to cover the costs of keeping the multi-agency initiative going in 2020/21. SWT and its partners have been providing self-contained accommodation at the Canonsgrove halls of residence in Trull for rough sleepers and tenants of homeless hostels who find it difficult to self-isolate and practice social distancing.

The site owned by Bridgwater and Taunton College, is being managed by The YMCA Dulverton Group who have also made their own Beach Hotel in Minehead available for rough sleepers in West Somerset.

Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT press release.

4. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Recycling sites switch to winter hours on 1 October

Every one of Somerset's 16 recycling sites will go over to their winter timetables from **Thursday 1 October**, with weekday opening hours of 9am to 5pm while weekends remain 9am to 4pm.

Summer hours - 9am-6pm when sites are open weekdays, 9am-4pm weekends - resume on **Thursday 1 April 2021**. With an impressive average recycling rate of well over 77%, Somerset's recycling sites network is open every day of the year except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day to take dozens of materials.

For more information on each recycling site, including opening schedules, details of charged materials, and van and trailer permits, click on recycling centres at www.somersetwaste.gov.uk.

To keep up to date with recycling sites, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at www.somersetwaste.gov.uk and follow @Somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter

5. BT Payphone Consultation

The final deadline for feedback for the current BT Payphone consultation is 12 noon on Wednesday 30 September. The final response is then sent to BT and the Secretary of State.

Please find attached the current updated Draft response to the BT Phone box consultation which has been updated following the feedback from District Councillors and Town and Parish Councils (sent out on 28/08/20).

There are still some gaps so please can you come back to the Governance Team via email governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk to confirm if you have any further comments as follows:

- Agree to closure
- Adopt
- Object to closure

If no response is received, for those that are blank it will be assumed that there is no objection to them closing.

Partner Engagement - Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) Highway Maintenance Update

SCC Highways are currently focusing on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching. The weather is definitely turning autumnal but, so far, in a good way: bright, breezy and not too wet. However, winter approaches and Highways are starting to gear up for the winter season ahead.

On Friday 2 October residents of Somerset West and Taunton may well see one or more of our bright yellow gritters out on the roads. This is for the winter pre-season training day. These training days take place at all of SCC's depots in late September/early October to familiarise new staff with what needs to be done and act as a refresher for the more experienced hands.

The day features a team briefing to go through policies and procedures, health & safety, what's new this year and to allow any questions. There is then familiarisation with the equipment, including fitting the snow ploughs to the gritters (and taking them off again!) and the installation of the demountable gritter bodies onto the back of a conventional highway maintenance truck (this is a bit like "Thunderbirds"!). The gritters are then taken out onto the road and the standard routes are driven. Each year there are always small changes to the network and this will allow the drivers to become familiar with them in daylight hours. This is also an opportunity to check route timings and also give the vehicles a good mechanical and electrical shakedown after their summer hibernation.

In Somerset West and Taunton, the western and the northern areas are covered by the four gritters from Minehead Depot whilst in the south and east they operate out of SCC's Bridgwater Depot at Dunball on Junction 23 of the M5.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

A joint response to misinformation released by Somerset County Council

A press release has been issued on behalf of the Leaders of Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West & Taunton Council, and South Somerset District Council to address the misinformation relayed by Somerset County Council in their recent publication, 'Your Somerset.'

Please [click here](#) to read the Leaders' joint response.

National Fire Chiefs Council Home Safety Week

Home Safety Week will run from **28 September to 4 October 2020** and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are encouraging people to be alert to alarms for a safer home. The week encourages people to assess the needs of their homes and ensure they have adequate alarm systems. For those most vulnerable groups, Fire and Rescue Services can assist with specific advice for the individual and, if required, fit smoke detection alarms. Some Fire and Rescue Services may be able to install carbon monoxide (CO) detection alarms too. Alarms save lives and in the event of a fire or CO incident they can provide precious time to escape. For further information [click here](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Chimney Fire Safety

A clean chimney can help prevent fires and structural damage to your property. Regular cleaning of your chimney or flues will eliminate the build-up of soot and clear obstructions such as bird or animal nests, leaves and debris. You will also reduce emissions into the atmosphere by assisting the complete combustion of the fuel.

It is not sufficient to use a vacuum cleaner and you should ensure your chimney flue is inspected regularly to prevent fires breaking out. Remember that fire guards can prevent serious injury or death and spark guards can prevent a serious fire.

Please [click here](#) for more information on how you can maintain your chimney and prevent a fire. You can also download a handy leaflet so you've got all the top tips.

If a chimney fire happens:

- leave the room, close the door and alert other people in the house
- Get out of the house, call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service
- Stay out until the fire and rescue service arrive.

Always ensure you have a working smoke alarm in your property and that you use a competent chimney sweep who is able to provide you with a certificate upon completion of their work.

Introducing the NEW NHS COVID-19 App

The NHS COVID-19 app was launched on 24 September in England and Wales and is part of the Government's large scale coronavirus (COVID-19) testing and contact tracing programme called the NHS Test and Trace service.

Pubs, restaurants, hairdressers, cinemas and other venues across England and Wales were urged to download QR codes in preparation for the launch of the new app. You can find out more information by clicking [here](#).

This app will be used, alongside traditional contact tracing, to notify users if they come into contact with someone who later tests positive for coronavirus. The app allows people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it helps the NHS trace individuals that may have coronavirus.

The app will help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area, so local authorities can respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives. The app does this while protecting a user's anonymity. Nobody, including the Government, will know who or where a particular user is.

Please [click here](#) for further information.

How can your business help support the national effort?

Business owners can help by [clicking here](#) to create a QR code poster for their business to be displayed in prominent locations encouraging visitors, staff, customers and suppliers to scan the poster to check in. [Click here](#) for guidance on producing a QR code poster for your business.

The Winter Economy Plan

This week Rishi Sunak unveiled the Government's plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months. The Government advised it would keep its support under review to protect jobs and the economy, with the action taken this week reflecting the evolving circumstances and uncertainty of the months ahead.

The package of measures, which applies to all regions and nations of the UK, includes:

Support for workers

A new [Job Support Scheme](#) will be introduced from 1 November to protect viable jobs in businesses who are facing lower demand over the winter months due to coronavirus.

Tax cuts and deferrals

As part of the package, the Government also announced it will extend the temporary 15% VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality sectors to the end of March next year. This will give businesses in the sector - which has been severely impacted by the pandemic - the confidence to maintain staff as they adapt to a new trading environment.

Giving businesses flexibility to pay back loans

The burden will be lifted on more than a million businesses who took out a Bounce Back Loan through a new Pay as You Grow flexible repayment system. This will provide flexibility for firms repaying a Bounce Back Loan.

Please [click here](#) to read more about the Government's winter economy plan.

Fans of Exmoor encouraged to share their love on 'Exmoor Day'
Monday 19 October is [#ExmoorDay](#) - a chance to celebrate all that Exmoor National Park offers to the nation and the world. Exmoor National Park boasts inspiring landscapes, thriving communities, incredible wildlife, enterprising businesses, and a rich cultural heritage stemming back centuries.

Exmoor Day has come about as part of a [co-ordinated tourism recovery plan](#) put together by partners to help counter the impacts of COVID-19. This year it will primarily be a virtual event on social media, with people sharing what they love about Exmoor and promoting their Exmoor-based products. On the day you can follow the [#ExmoorDay](#) hashtag to join in and local communities, businesses and fans are all invited to take part by celebrating Exmoor in their own style.

Fans of Exmoor near and far are also being invited to send in short films of themselves saying why they love Exmoor as part of a film that will be shared online and through social media on the day. For a chance to be part of it, take a short video (in landscape orientation) of you briefly stating why you love Exmoor / what you most love about Exmoor (ideally no more than 5-10 seconds) on a smartphone and send your video recording via WeTransfer to Katrina at KJMunro@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk by **12 October** at the latest.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release.

Community Support - What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Community Council for Somerset

Let's get West Somerset moving!

The Community Council for Somerset are asking people to consider donating their unwanted car to offer a life-changing opportunity to someone in their local community. [Click here](#) to find out more about this innovative scheme, supported by the [West Somerset Opportunity Area](#).

Mind in Somerset to Offer Half-Day Online Workshop

Mind in Somerset have developed a half-day online workshop for anybody responsible for the mental health and wellbeing of employees within their organisation. The workshops will look at how to start - and continue - the conversation about mental health within the organisation, how to write a wellbeing action plan, and help you understand what works well and not so well.

There will also be the opportunity to explore what further support and training might be necessary in order to maintain workplace wellbeing.

Please disseminate this information to business and/or organisations you think may benefit from this half-day online workshop. The upcoming session will be held on **Wednesday 30 September**, 9:30am to 12:30pm. There is an attendance fee per person payable and spaces are strictly limited. To book a space please click [HERE](#).

Somerset Talking Therapies

Somerset Talking Therapies is an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service. They offer emotional and psychological support to anyone - aged over 18 and registered with a Somerset GP - who is feeling anxious or depressed. You can refer yourself directly via their website by [clicking here](#).

As of August 2020 Somerset Talking Therapies continues to offer all treatments through online face to face and telephone sessions only. This is to safeguard patients and workers during the COVID-19 epidemic. There is no planned date yet to return to any venue-based, face to face work.

Patient attendance has increased during the past 4 months when Somerset Talking Therapies has offered online video treatments; recovery from psychological problems is high; they have been more flexible over days and times of appointments; patients no longer need to travel to appointments and can have treatment in the comfort of their own home; the service is paying less on staff travel and rent of accommodation, which can be put back into direct patient care.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

VCS Newsletter - Break From Publication

SWT has taken a break from publication during September and will consider the options for autumn 2020.

Health and Welfare

Latest COVID-19 Restrictions

This week the Government has announced further national measures to address rising cases of coronavirus in England. All pubs, bars, restaurants and other hospitality venues in England must have a **10pm closing time from Thursday 24 September** to help curb the spread of coronavirus. The sector will also be restricted by law to table service only. It comes as the UK's COVID-19 alert level moved to 4, meaning transmission is 'high or rising exponentially'.

Please [click here](#) to read the latest Government announcements on the coronavirus.

It is critical that everybody observes the following key behaviours:

- **HANDS** - Wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds.

- **FACE** - Cover your face in enclosed spaces, especially where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **SPACE** - Stay 2 metres apart where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place.

New Package to support and Enforce Self-isolation

On 20 September, the Government announced a new package to support and enforce self-isolation. From 28 September, people will be **required by law** to self-isolate when instructed to by NHS Test and Trace. Those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result will be supported by a payment of £500.

New fines for those breaching self-isolation rules will start at £1,000 - bringing this in line with the penalty for breaking quarantine after international travel - but could increase to up to £10,000 for repeat offences and for the most egregious breaches, including for those preventing others from self-isolating.

The Department of Health and Social Care and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are engaging with local authorities to take this work forward. A Test and Trace Support Payment Implementation Group has been established and will meet daily, starting from 21 September, to test approaches and work through all implementation issues. Further information can be found [here](#).

If you develop symptoms, you must self-isolate until you have received your test results.

National Fitness Day 2020

This year National Fitness Day was held on 23 September and as you will already be very aware, life is very different for everyone at the moment. Most people know the benefits that exercise can have on mental health. Having said that it is important to remember that you don't have to run a marathon or be the best cyclist in the world to achieve this. Gardening, walking the dog or hoovering to latest tunes is also exercise and good for your wellbeing.

[Mind](#) have some really nice ideas on how physical activity can benefit you and to help to combat anxiety, stress and depression. [Click here](#) to find out more.

2020 Winter Flu Vaccinations

The Talking Cafe went Live on 22 September to discuss the plan in Somerset for the Winter Flu Vaccination programme. If you missed it, you can always catch up [here](#) anytime.

Travel Restrictions

The guidance for travelling abroad is constantly being updated by Government. Please [click here](#) to read the latest information relating to the travel corridors.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

A single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs coronavirus-related support from their councils. The **0300 790 6275** number is available seven days per week 8am - 6pm.

Anyone who can't find help within their own local networks and volunteers, can use this number to get help and advice around:

- Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions
- Support for the homeless
- Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious
- Transport to medical appointments
- Waste collection and disposal
- Financial support

This number won't cover medical advice, for which people will need to continue to use the 111 NHS phone number if they cannot get help online.

Please refer to the websites below for the latest advice, help and guidance:

Links to the most up to date COVID-19 guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

[Public Health England](#)

[NHS - Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

Q. Can I start to work from home again?

A. The Government guidance is 'to help contain the virus office workers who can work effectively from home should do so over the winter. Where an employer, in consultation with their employee, judges an employee can carry out their normal duties from home they should do so. Public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary. Anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work. The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if [COVID-19 secure guidelines](#) are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk'.

Q. I understand under the current restrictions in a social capacity, no more than 6 people can meet either indoors or outdoors. Are children counted in the group of six?

A. Yes.

Crime / Safeguarding

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Police Open Day Goes Virtual!

Officers and staff from Avon and Somerset Police (A&SP) hosted a live virtual Open Day on Sunday 20 September. The annual Open Day is normally held at the joint HQ of Avon & Somerset Police and Avon Fire & Rescue Service in Portishead. The virtual Open Day was an opportunity for A&SP to showcase the work of the emergency services and community organisations. There were live displays from the Dog Section, Roads Policing, Firearms unit and Mounted Section. You can watch a replay of the Open Day via the A&SP YouTube channel by clicking [here](#).

Police and fire service launch wearable tech initiative to help people affected by dementia

A wearable tech wristband for helping people with dementia was launched this week on the BBC Crimewatch Roadshow. Sergeant Stuart King and Darren French from Avon Fire & Rescue were live on the show to talk about the new initiative, which is the latest part of the ongoing Dementia Safeguarding Scheme that helps to protect vulnerable elders. If you missed it, you can watch it [here](#).

Using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, the wristband stores essential information about the wearer, including their name and details of next of kin. The information can be accessed via the NFC app when a mobile is held nearby, alleviating the need for physical contact which can cause further distress. This information can be used by emergency services, health professionals or community members to get the wearer back to safety should they be found whilst lost or confused.

The initiative is a collaboration between the Senior Citizen Liaison Team (charity), Avon & Somerset Police and Avon Fire & Rescue Service. Between them they have provided initial funding for 750 wristbands which will be distributed across the community. To read the full press release please [click here](#).

Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner's Facebook Live, 29 September at 12pm

Following this week's announcement from the Prime Minister, PCC Sue Mountstevens is sure you will have many questions about the impact of the new regulations on policing in Avon and Somerset.

PCC Sue Mountstevens will be putting your policing questions to the Chief Constable LIVE on Facebook next **Tuesday, 29 September at 12pm**. Please [click here](#) to send your questions and to watch the Facebook Live.

Police warn motorists to be vigilant following catalytic converter thefts

Avon and Somerset Police are asking motorists to be vigilant following a recent increase in thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles in the force area. Catalytic converters are attractive to thieves due to the current high prices of the metals

inside them, and because they are relatively quick and easy to steal. Hybrid cars such as the **Toyota Prius**, which have more valuable catalytic converters, are particularly likely to be targeted.

During the past six months, the police have seen a spike in these types of thefts at Park and Rides in North Somerset, Bath, Bristol and **Taunton**. Neighbourhood police are carrying out targeted patrols of the affected areas.

If you see someone acting suspiciously around a vehicle, report it to police on 101. Ideally, provide a vehicle registration/make/model and colour, and a description of the suspects.

Finally

It is important to keep up to date with the latest [information and advice from the government](#).

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter [@swtcouncil](https://twitter.com/swtcouncil)
Please see our dedicated [webpage](#) for updates.

If you have concerns about your own health and coronavirus please visit the [NHS](#) website.

#Hands #Face #Space

Attachment:

BT payphone consultation