

# Somerset West and Taunton

## Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

### Issue 28. Week ending 4/10/20

**#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. SWT launches Community Chest**

SWT has launched a new fund to help communities recover from the effects of COVID-19. The Community Chest of £250,000 is now open to support one-off initiatives run by the voluntary and community sector, and wider community groups who have been unable to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other sources.

Grants of up to £7,500 can be awarded to supplement activities and projects, covering up to 75% of the total cost with applicants needing to find at least 25% from their own or other sources.

The Community Chest Scheme will give consideration to initiatives that will help community groups become sustainable in the longer term; that will help the community to recover from the effects of COVID-19; and are aligned to

SWT's corporate priorities of housing and communities, the environment and the economy.

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

To apply and find out more information on eligibility, please click [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 few weeks, which are as follows:

- 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)
- Wednesday 14 October - **Special Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 9 October)
- Tuesday 20 October - **Special Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 15 October)
- Wednesday 21 October - **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 16 October)
- Monday 26 October - **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Wednesday 21 October)
- Wednesday 28 October - **Special Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 23 October)
- Thursday 29 October - **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 26 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](mailto: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. SWT declares ecological emergency**

Somerset West and Taunton Council has declared an ecological emergency complementing the climate emergency declaration made in February 2019.

A meeting of the Full Council unanimously supported a motion which gives equal importance to ecological issues alongside climate emergency actions.

The motion recognised that societies and economies are intimately linked with and depend on biodiversity and nature, and that steps need to be taken to protect and enhance our natural habitats.

SWT will now seek to address ecological issues alongside climate emergency actions, maximising opportunities from combining both the climate and ecological emergencies together.

It will manage Council services, buildings and land in a biodiversity-friendly manner; embed ecological initiatives alongside climate action in all work areas; and ensure that addressing both emergencies are strategic priorities for planning policies and design guides for new development.

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

### **4. SWT encourages residents to go green**

SWT is encouraging homeowners and private landlords to apply for a Green Homes Grant in line with its corporate priorities for climate change and housing.

The Government's Green Homes Grant scheme will allow Somerset West and Taunton residents to make home improvements helping to save up to £600 a year on their energy bills. It will fund up to two-thirds of the cost of works with grants available for up to £5,000. Low income households are eligible to receive 100% government funding up to a maximum of £10,000.

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

To find out more information on eligibility, please [click here](#).

### **5. SWT adopts affordable employment land policy**

SWT is making it easier for small businesses to set up or expand in rural areas across the district. Full Council this week approved the adoption of a Local Development Order (LDO) which will support the delivery of small scale industrial and employment space in rural areas in line with its Corporate

Strategy objective to ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land to meet different business needs.

The affordable employment land LDO will allow independent entrepreneurs and small business to create or expand their businesses outside of SWT's established centres for employment without the administrative costs and burdens of a full planning application.

It was developed in response to demand from small businesses to set up or expand their existing operations but has become increasingly significant as the Council works to promote economic recovery from COVID-19.

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

## 6. Free Trees Reminder

SWT 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.

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.

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

## 7. How to Report Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping - dumping rubbish - is an environmental crime. It's a blot on our landscape and a threat to wildlife. We can all fight fly-tipping by reporting dumped rubbish and, if possible, who dumped it. Everyone, including businesses, must be responsible for how they get rid of rubbish, even when it's left your home or premises.

If you pay someone to remove your rubbish - man-with-a-van, builders, gardeners, carpet-layers or others - ask to see their waste carrier's licence, and make sure you know where your rubbish will go. If you don't you could be fined. For more information check how we can all fight fly-tipping section on [Somerset Waste Partnership](#) website.

### How to report fly-tipping:

- To report flytipping use SWT [report fly-tipping](#) online form or phone **0300 304 8000**
- make sure you give the exact spot. If you don't know the address include a description of nearest landmark in your report
- take a photograph if you can and include it in your report. SWT will attend to reported fly-tipping incidents within 5 working days.

## 8. 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.

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](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk).

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

## **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. In recent weeks SCC Highways has reported on the preparatory work for the 2021 carriageway surface dressing programme. Most road running surfaces today are dressings, a process that evolved in the early part of the 20th century. Prior to then, roads were either cobbled or made of pitched large stones with a fine, gritty topping. They were muddy in winter and could be dusty in dry weather. This became a particular problem with the introduction of the motor car. Initially tar was used to keep the dust down and later chippings were added on top to protect the tar layer and improve skid resistance.

As time progressed, experience and science informed new developments which resulted in the modern surface dressings of today. Modified bitumen emulsions from the oil industry have replaced coal tar, a by-product of "town gas" production. Different sizes and grading of chippings, and combinations of both materials, have evolved to address different road conditions. Factors that are taken into account when designing a dressing are the volume of traffic, especially heavy vehicles; road gradient and curvature; junctions and other high stress features; tree cover; and climate. The design process allows for the fact that conditions are much different in Somerset than they are in, say, Lancashire!

Armed with site measurements, observations and data, the design process takes place during the winter so that orders can be placed for bitumen emulsion binder and chippings in time for the summer programme.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

### **Temporary Road Closure - Viney Street, Taunton**

To enable Wessex Water to carry out supply separation works, Viney Street, Taunton will be closed for a distance of approximately 50 metres. The [Order](#)

becomes effective on **15 October 2020** and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on the 19 October and last until 23 October 2020 between the hours of (00:00 - 23:59) for a total of five days.

To view a map of the road closure including alternative routes please [click here](#).

## **Apply now for 2021 school places**

Somerset parents are being urged to apply for school places online and in time. Whether your child is starting school for the first time, or transferring to their next school, applications need to be made through [Somerset County Council's website](#). The deadline for parents to submit applications for secondary school places is **Saturday 31 October 2020**. This applies to all children moving from primary to secondary school, or middle to upper school, in September 2021.

The deadline for primary school place submissions is Friday 15 January 2021. This applies to all children starting school for the first time in September 2021, as well as those moving between infant and junior or first and middle school.

Please [click here](#) for further information and to submit an application.

## **Somerset Library Service**

### **Libraries offer digital help for job seekers**

Somerset Libraries are kicking off National Libraries Week with an innovative new scheme. From **Monday 5 October** iPads will be available to job seekers looking for an extra bit of help in their quest for employment.

The free iPad Loan Scheme from SCC is designed to help people looking for a new job or career but who may not have the IT skills or equipment they need.

Members of Somerset Libraries can borrow a device for up to six weeks free of charge from Bridgwater, Chard, Minehead, Shepton Mallet or Taunton libraries.

The tablets are pre-loaded with links, information and support for anyone in Somerset currently looking for employment, or who think they may need to be looking soon. The iPads are data-enabled, meaning people do not need to have internet access at home to use them.

There's a simple step-by-step 'How to Use' video on using the iPad and information including how to develop an effective CV, tips for successful interviews, how to search for local jobs and some useful health and wellbeing information and links.

Additional free one-to-one support is available from the Positive People Programme, including a 24/7 helpline, digital support, virtual job clubs and workshops.

To read the full press release and find out more about the scheme please [click here](#).

## **National Fire Chiefs Council**

### **Home Safety Week 28 September to 4 October 2020**

This week is Home Safety Week and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are encouraging people to assess the needs of their homes and ensure they have adequate alarm systems.

In 20% of accidental dwelling fires in the UK smoke alarms fail to activate. The most common reason was because the fire was outside the alarm's range. So, the NFCC is asking householders to install alarms to ensure the whole home is covered. Smoke alarms should be installed in the rooms used most, this is where a fire is most likely to start. The NFCC would also like consistent legislation for the fitting of detection in the UK. All homes in the UK should be equally protected by adequate detection regardless of tenure or location. See below for some home safety tips:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on each level of your home and also in the rooms you use most
- Carbon monoxide alarms should be installed in all rooms where there is fuel burning appliance
- Test all alarms regularly to make sure they work
- Ensure all appliances are installed and maintained correctly by registered and suitably qualified tradespeople
- Alarms don't last forever, replace them at least every 10 years
- If you can, interlink alarms

For further information [click here](#).

## **Exmoor National Park**

As Europe's first [International Dark Sky Reserve](#), and with some of the darkest skies in the UK, Exmoor National Park (ENP) is an ideal destination for stargazing. As well as expert advice, some businesses also offer telescopes, guide books and other equipment, and these are also available to rent and buy from National Park Centres in Lynmouth, Dunster and Dulverton.

In light of the coronavirus update, ENP has reviewed the most recent government guidance and are happy that some events can still go ahead, although all events must be pre-booked with the relevant event organiser.

The Exmoor Dark Skies Festival runs from **16-31 October** and there is also a Dark Sky Photography Competition. Please [click here](#) for more details, including regular updates and changes to the schedule.

## **Wessex Water Recovery Fund offers support to COVID-hit communities**

Wessex Water is providing more financial help for community groups in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The Wessex Water Recovery Fund aims to strengthen communities following the COVID-19 outbreak, with an emphasis on local rather than national projects. The fund will be available to charities and community groups across Somerset from the 5 October and will close on 4 December with decisions made at local community panels in January 2021.

The fund is part of the new Wessex Water Foundation, a multi-million pound initiative which was launched in June and provides a dedicated funding stream for charitable and community projects across the Wessex Water region. It is run in partnership with the [Somerset Community Foundation](#) and has already been prioritising those worst affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Particular priority will be given to those groups that are working to:

- support people in financially difficult circumstances
- help build stronger communities
- support the green recovery with new initiatives
- restore and protect nature and wildlife for community health and wellbeing.

From April 2021 the Wessex Water Foundation plans to provide at least half a million pounds of funding every year to support community projects, local environment projects, debt advice and charities helping those who are suffering the consequences of poverty through low income or unemployment.

To find out more about the Wessex Water Foundation please [click here](#).

## **Community Support - What help is out there?**

### **Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

#### **Grants from The Somerset Fund to help local charities thanks to generous local businesses**

If you are a grassroots community group based in Somerset, grants are available up to the value of £2,500 from **The Somerset Fund**. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) manages the Fund and is encouraging applications from smaller charities and community groups that run on less than £100,000 per year.

The grants will be ‘unrestricted’, which means they can be used to pay for ongoing running costs, also known as ‘core costs’. Applications to the Fund through SCF’s website and the next **deadline to apply is Friday 16 October 2020**.

To find out more about the fund and how to apply please [click here](#).

#### **Lendology CIC (Community Interest Company)**

Lendology CIC is a trading name of Wessex Resolutions CIC. Based on the outskirts of Taunton, the team works across the South West providing a variety of loan schemes in partnership with local district Councils. Starting in 2003, the organisation created a partnership with ten local councils to provide loans to eligible homeowners to fund essential home repairs, improvements or adaptations. This was when the central government was encouraging local councils to create sustainable schemes for homeowners and reduce the reliance on grant funding.

As a not-for-profit organisation, using the Council partner funding, Lendology CIC are able to provide homeowners access to financial support to help with the cost of repairs.

The scope of the scheme has been developed in line with individual council housing policies. A range of loan schemes are available to cater to the needs of varying audiences including homeowners, park homeowners, landlords, empty property owners and first-time buyers.

To find out more about Lendology CIC and the type of financial assistance available please [click here](#).

### **Home-Start West Somerset**

Home-Start schemes are rooted in the communities they serve and managed locally. They are supported by the national organisation. This offers direction, training, information and guidance to schemes as well as a robust quality assurance programme in which Home-Start West Somerset received an outstanding 100% result in 2013.

There is [no central funding](#) available from the national body so the local scheme has to raise all of its own funds. This creates a significant challenge for the team. Home-Start West Somerset works with families from Minehead, Dunster, Porlock, Dulverton and Watchet right through to Stogursey and everywhere in between. They offer support, friendship and practical support to parents with young children in their local community. The Annual Report has just been produced and is attached in PDF format. To visit the recently re-launched Home-Start West Somerset website please [click here](#).

### **Good Neighbours Scheme Launched in North Taunton**

Communities in the North Town area of Taunton, who have come together this year to offer a lifeline to those in need during this coronavirus pandemic, are the latest group to join the Somerset Good Neighbours Scheme.

Good Neighbours Schemes are community projects run by local groups of volunteers to help those who are frail, elderly, disabled, vulnerable or isolated to enjoy a better quality of life. Help is given free of charge with simple tasks such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, attending hospital appointments, dog walking, gardening as well as the opportunity for a regular friendly chat.

During lockdown, North Town Community Support offered a lifeline to over 150 people, not just in practical terms with shopping and prescriptions, but also by helping to reduce isolation and loneliness. The whole community has benefitted, with lots of new friendships made and everyone has the reassurance of knowing they can access help, should they need it.

Volunteering gave people a positive purpose too. Some of those who couldn't get out and about or help physically made a massive contribution in other ways with things like sharing food and sewing masks.

In September this year, the group joined the Somerset Good Neighbours Scheme, making it part of a supportive network with access to peer support and advice on best practice.

Somerset Good Neighbours is run by CCS (Community Council for Somerset) and is supported by funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. For those considering setting up a Good Neighbours Scheme, or wanting to find out more please [click here](#).

### **VCS Newsletter -Publication out 16 October 2020**

The next edition of the Voluntary Community Sector newsletter will be released on **Friday 16 October 2020**, however, any urgent news bulletins will be circulated to subscribers when applicable.

## **Health and Welfare**

### **Download the new NHS Test and Trace app now**

The NHS [COVID-19 app](#) has launched in England and Wales, including QR check-in at venues. You can now download the app and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise.

It is available to anyone aged 16 and over in multiple languages and forms a central part of the NHS Test and Trace - identifying contacts of those who have tested positive for coronavirus.

The contact tracing element of the app works by using low-energy Bluetooth to log the amount of time you spend near other app users, and the distance between you, so it can alert you if someone you have been close to later tests positive for COVID-19 - even if you don't know each other.

The app will advise you to self-isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It will also enable you to check symptoms, book a free test if needed and get your test results.

### **NHS Nightingale Bristol - Save the date!**

NHS Nightingale Bristol is delighted to be taking part in the autumn Bristol distinguished lecture series with their landlord and host, UWE Bristol.

The free event will take place online on **Wednesday 14 October** to support social distancing and starts at 6.30pm. Panel members will discuss 'responding to a national crisis - building the NHS Nightingale Hospital Bristol.'

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

### **Please remember Hands, Face, Space**

It is so important to remember the coronavirus basics as we enter autumn and winter:

- **Hands** - Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds

- **Face** - Cover your face in enclosed spaces
- **Space** - Keep 2m apart where possible

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you must:

- Stay at home
- Call 119 or book a test online at [gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)
- Self-isolate until you get the results from that test

## **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. My child has been sent home from school to self-isolate for 14 days as a child in their class / year group has tested positive for coronavirus. What are the top tips to help me manage this situation?**
- A.** It is important that families remain alert and take care to avoid the spread of infection. You will need to discuss as a family how you will manage your time at home and what this means for your child/young person. Try not to feel overwhelmed to do lots every day, keep it simple and use this time to

build on your relationship together. Provide structure to each day - setting a plan for each day can support children and young people to know what to expect as well as help to keep a positive routine. Set breaks throughout the day for free choice time when your child or young person can connect with other young people using a form of social media, online. [Click here](#) to read more about how you can manage your child's / young persons' time out of school.

**Q. How will the new rules on gatherings of more than 6 people be enforced?**

**A.** The police will be able to enforce the legal limits, and if you break them you could face a fine (fixed penalty notice) of £200, doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of £6,400. Hospitality businesses are also required to ensure there are no unlawful gatherings in their premises that should also be COVID-19 secure. Breaches will be enforced. Any breaches are liable of a fine of up to £10,000. From 28 September the Government extended these legal requirements to extra businesses in the leisure and entertainment sectors. Anyone holding a gathering of more than 30 (such as a rave or house party) could face a £10,000 fine.

## Crime / Safeguarding

### Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

#### Local Policing and Crime Services Survey due to end on 7 October

There is only one week left to participate and share your views about police and crime services in your community. Each community has different needs and priorities, and coronavirus has caused great disruption to the way we all live and work.

As we all begin the journey of recovery from the impact of the global health pandemic, A&SP want to make positive changes to their services to make sure they focus money, police officers and resources in the right places.

A&SP are asking local people to help them understand what matters most to our communities and where they think the extra officers should be by answering this [short survey](#).

### Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner's Latest Facebook Live

PCC Sue Mountstevens put your policing questions to the Chief Constable during the latest Facebook LIVE held on 29 September. If you missed it, please [click here](#) to watch the conversation.

## 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/](http://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**

**Attachments:**

*Lendology leaflet*

*Home-start Annual Report*