

# Somerset West and Taunton

## **Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.**

### **Issue 34. Week ending 15/11/20**

**#StayAtHome    #ProtectTheNHS    #SaveLives**

#### **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

#### **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. Remembrance Commemorations**

The usual Civic programme of events did not take place this year as we adhered to Government guidelines to keep the community safe.

Wreaths were placed on the war memorial and the Normandy Stone in Vivary Park in preparation for Remembrance Sunday and a series of videos were shared on SWT social media platforms throughout the week to commemorate those who served. Please [click here](#) to view these tributes.

[#WeWillRememberThem](#)

In addition, SWT Councillors observed a silence at the meeting of Full Council in honour of the sacrifice made by so many.

## 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 18 November – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 13 November)
- Thursday 19 November – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 16 November). The agenda includes applications relating to Ashbrittle, Churchinford, Ham, Norton Fitzwarren and Stoke St Gregory.

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.**

## 3. Rock armour arrives at Blue Anchor Bay

SWT is ready to start the second phase of emergency work to strengthen the sea defences at Blue Anchor Bay following delivery of 1800 tonnes of rock armour.

The Council carried out initial works to stabilise the wall and reduce the risk of collapse in July this year. The second phase of work will involve using the granite rock armour to provide additional protection at the foot of the cliff.

The rock was delivered by barge from Cornwall this week and is currently in the bay ready to be placed above, below and to the east of the low sea defence wall below the Blue Anchor Bay Hotel.

Placement of the rock is expected to start next week. This area of the Blue Anchor Beach and the slipway will be closed for periods during the works which are expected to last for up to four weeks. The two phases of work are being funded by a grant of £385,000 from the Environment Agency.

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

#### **4. REMINDER- National Restrictions effective from 5 November**

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why, from **Thursday 5 November** until **Wednesday 2 December**, the Government is taking the following action:

1. Requiring people to stay at home
2. Preventing gathering with people you do not live with
3. Closing certain businesses and venues

To find out what this means in more detail, please [click here](#).

#### **5. The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline**

If you are self-isolating or need extra help, 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. If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support please [click here](#).

#### **6. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) – Addendum**

Following new national restrictions being imposed in England, for the period 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2020, the Government has provided Councils with funding to help support businesses affected by the restrictions.

The first fund is for a mandatory grant scheme, where the Government has set the eligibility rules. This will apply to business premises which:

- [must close](#), (and includes non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality businesses);
- and appear on the local rating list, compiled by the [Valuation Office Agency](#).

This scheme is officially known as the [Local Restrictions Support Grant \(Closed\) - Addendum](#) and only applies during the period of national restriction.

SWT is awaiting final guidance and clarification from the Government in relation to this grant, and are working with partner authorities to ensure a consistent approach in its administration. Once details are available SWT will finalise the application process and start inviting applications. The application form will be available on the [SWT website](#) as well as publicised via Facebook and Twitter.

For more information about this grant, please [click here](#). Subscribe to SWT business email alerts by [clicking here](#).

## **7. Additional Restrictions Grant**

The second funding SWT has received is an [Additional Restrictions Grant](#). Councils will be able to decide how best to use this money to help support businesses affected by national restrictions (whether the business is open or closed and whether they occupy properties rated for business rates or not). SWT has only just received this funding and the associated guidance and will need time to consider the options. Further information will appear on our [website](#) in due course.

## **8. SWT pays tribute to John Meikle MBE**

SWT has paid tribute to ex-Councillor, Past Mayor and Freeman of the Borough John Meikle MBE who passed away last week. Mr Meikle served as a councillor for 58 years having been first elected in 1958 to represent the Wilton Ward on Taunton Town Council.

Mr Meikle's remarkable dedication was recognised in 1988 when he was made an MBE for services to local government. In 2004 he was also given the rare honour of being made a Freeman of the Borough of Taunton Deane.

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

## **9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Tackling food waste**

Each year, about 7 million tonnes of food and drink is wasted by UK homes, and more than half of that could have been consumed. Wasting this food costs the average household £470 a year, rising to nearly £700 for a family with children – the equivalent of around £60 a month. As if this cost is not enough, you then pay again to treat the waste – 70% is picked up by the local authority and the rest is poured down the drain.

Food waste makes up around 15% by weight of all household waste in Somerset. Most of this waste occurs through cooking and preparing too much or not using food in time. People are getting more food wise, but there is still more that we can do to make better use of food and save money too.

Please [click here](#) to find out how you can reduce your food waste and save money.

## **Recycle More Update**

The first week of Mendip's new Recycle More service generated an extra 38 tonnes of recycling, initial figures have shown. The impressive stats include nine extra tonnes of plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, which equates to roughly 200 cubic metres – more than the size of two double-decker London buses.

It's an increase of more than 22% in plastic as residents across the district get behind the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) expanded recycling service. Week one also saw a 35% increase in steel cans. These, along with the plastic, go in the Bright Blue Bags which are already becoming a familiar sight across Mendip. For further information please [click here](#).

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

## 10. Stronger Somerset

You will find the Stronger Somerset campaign [microsite](#) contains recently updated information, as well as the proposal and executive summary. You can also sign up to receive the Stronger Somerset newsletter by [clicking here](#).

In order to gauge opinion and appetite for unitary authorities in Somerset, (and specifically support for the Stronger Somerset proposals), the four District Councils have commissioned a telephone public survey which is being conducted by [Ipsos MORI](#).

## 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 and are pleased to state that this year's planned schedule of routine gully emptying in the West Somerset area is now complete for this financial year.

The reconstruction has commenced this week of the cattle grid at **North Hill Road, Minehead**, as the road heads out of the town and onto the moor, towards **Selworthy Beacon**. The existing grid has quite steep road approaches to it. Recently, SCC has started to receive feedback from drivers that the change in gradients was triggering the radar controlled automatic braking systems on modern cars, causing the on-board computer control to stop them suddenly as they were approaching the grid. SCC will completely replace the cattle grid with a new one and to re-profile the surface of the road in order to prevent this vehicle braking phenomenon. The grid and associated bypass gate and fencing will be widened to improve access to the camping and caravanning site further along the road. SCC Highways are also taking the opportunity to improve the highway drainage by modifying the kerb-lines and adding extra road gullies.

**In order to carry out this major work safely, the road will be closed for four weeks from Monday 9 November.**

The work has been timed for when the camping and caravanning site is closed, in order to minimise disruption. The weather has been good so far this week with regard to this project and the work has progressed well.

The hedge cutting and dead tree removal work on the **A39 between Dragon Cross, Bilbrook and the Washford Inn** is nearly completed as we go to press and was timed to take advantage of the predicted reduced traffic volumes due to Lockdown. This work was to remove the dead, diseased and dying trees that have been preventing SCC Highways from carrying out required hedge trimming works and has led to improved available road width and sight lines for road users. Traffic management is by temporary traffic signals, manually operated at busy times.

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

### **Useful links to report faults**

As the clocks have now changed and it's getting dark earlier, there are more queries about overgrown trees, verges or hedges, blocked drains and street lights that don't work.

To report faults in the following areas, please click on the relevant link:-

[Dangerous/Overgrown Tree alongside the public highway](#)

[Report an overgrown verge or hedge on the road](#)

[Street light not working](#)

[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](#)

### **Somerset COVID-19 Survey**

In light of the latest announcement on restrictions, it is even more important that your views and concerns about the coronavirus pandemic and what guidance, support and information you might need are noted.

The Covid-19 Engagement Board welcomes your feedback - it only takes a few minutes to complete and can be accessed if you [click here](#).

### **Lockdown two – libraries still here for you**

Following the new Covid-19 restrictions which came into effect on the 5 November, Somerset Libraries would like to reassure customers that key services are remaining in place during this new lockdown period.

The popular "library choice" service and the reservation service for specific requests will continue to be available, but customers will no longer be able to browse shelves. The libraries service will also still provide limited access to the people's network computers which will be available for essential users.

The "Library choice" service enables you to request up to ten books hand-picked by a member of staff based on your favourite genres or authors. Simply complete the

request form on the Somerset Libraries website, or in person at the library, and staff will be in touch regarding your selections. Alternatively, if you want to borrow a particular title, then you can still use the reservation system via [www.LibrariesWest.org.uk](http://www.LibrariesWest.org.uk) (charges may apply).

From Thursday 5 November, all items already on loan or items borrowed during lockdown will not be due back any earlier than **14 December**. Library staff can offer a longer loan period if required, and all loans can be renewed online, by contacting [libraiesmail@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:libraiesmail@somerset.gov.uk) or telephoning **0300 123 2224**.

The excellent online offer continues, so that library members can download books, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and comics free of charge. What's more, regular online events and updates will be posted across the Somerset Libraries social media pages.

Please [click here](#) for more information and find 'Somerset Libraries UK' on Facebook, @SomersetLib on Twitter or search for Somerset Libraries on Instagram.

## **Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L)**

Under the new restrictions the Government does not require schools, colleges or universities to close, and that includes SS&L. They will be continuing to support all their existing and new students during the latest period of lockdown and will continue to provide high quality teaching. Courses will continue in person, via distance learning and blending learning as they have done since September.

With the lockdown bringing uncertainty to many, SS&L hope the community learning offers will provide improved wellbeing, improved confidence, and new skills and knowledge for learners at this uncertain time.

## **Community Learning Workshops & Courses**

SS&L are also offering a bumper month of Community Learning Workshops and Courses which are free for anybody aged 19+ who lives in the Somerset area and has resided in the UK for at least three years. Please click on the relevant link to find out more and book your place!

[Self care](#) - 16 November

[Getting to know social media better - Facebook](#) - 16 November

[Getting to know social media better - LinkedIn](#) - 16 November

[Getting to know social media better - WhatsApp](#) - 16 November

[Introduction to using English in the workplace \(ESOL\)](#) - 16 November

[Developing emotional resilience](#) - 16 November

[How to use Zoom](#) (Taunton) - 16 November

[Digital career searching](#) - 18 November

[Feel happier](#) - 18 November

[Childcare taster session](#) - 18 November

Creating and Managing a Budget workshops – [18 November](#) & [20 November](#)

## **Somerset Education Business Partnership**

### **Building the Workforce of the Future**

Somerset TalentED Academies help young people to gain an understanding of different key Somerset employment sectors by providing insights into and connections with a wide range of employers. The opportunity to do this in a different way was just too good to pass up, so they have gone virtual and teamed up with [Learn Live UK](#) to deliver bespoke input on 10 industry sectors that can be found in Somerset.

The broadcasts start with **Construction on Wednesday 18 November at 4pm**. Students will also be able to access information on the potential next steps into that industry and other relevant information on the [Learn Live website](#).

## **STEP-UP Employment and Skills Broadcast**

**Thursday 19 November at 6pm**

### **New Futures – Employment and Redundancy Support**

To find out more information about this broadcast and to register, [click here](#).

## **Virtual Careers Fair for the Care Sector**

A virtual careers fair for the **Care Sector** has been arranged for **24 November 2020 from 11am – 1pm**, via Zoom, where organisations, businesses and training providers will be sharing their opportunities.

Youtube videos from each participant are now available in preparation for the actual event, which can be accessed [here](#). On the day of the event organisations, businesses and training providers will host a virtual room for discussions with those who are interested to have an informal chat. Tickets can be booked via this [Eventbrite link](#).

## **Exmoor National Park**

### **Funding for projects benefitting Exmoor**

Community organisations and charities involved in projects helping to keep Exmoor special or connect people with the area's special qualities have until **23 November** to submit applications to [Exmoor National Park's Partnership Fund](#).

Recent awards include:

- **Exmoor Pony Compost** - Support to develop an innovative business idea towards the ongoing work of the Exmoor Pony Project, caring for Exmoor ponies. Well-mature pony manure is used to create rich, peat-free compost and sold to gardeners and growers.
- **Exmoor Studios** – A grant towards transforming a former Bank in Dulverton into a recording studio and theatre complex for local people. The new venture

aims to attract visitors and trade to Dulverton following Covid-19, whilst safeguarding a historic building. It will be home to Exestream Radio and provide facilities for meetings, conferences and exhibitions.

- **Nature-based Play Area** – A contribution towards the development of a new natural play area in Luxborough including a dormouse-themed play sculpture with interpretation of the secret life of the Dormice population in Charget Woods.

Grants of up to **£2,500** are available from the National Park Authority towards projects that help to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, and/or promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy its special qualities.

Details of the scheme criteria and application process are available at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/partnership-fund](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/partnership-fund). Applications must be received in full by the **23 November**, with decisions made within a month. Further rounds will be announced subject to availability.

### **Western Power Distribution (WPD) Power Cut Advice**

From time to time Western Power Distribution carries out work in the electricity distribution system, for example, to maintain the electricity network or to connect new supplies. Inevitably this means electricity supplies have to be interrupted for practical and safety reasons until this work is completed.

Whilst WPD always endeavour to carry out their work with the minimum amount of inconvenience to their customers, there will be times when they have no choice but to interrupt the electricity supply.

What can you do?

- Keep a torch handy and make sure you check its batteries
- Keep your freezer door shut while the electricity supply is off
- Make up flasks with hot drinks and food for use during the supply interruption.

For further information and guidance, please click [here](#) or see the attached 'Planned Interruptions to your Electricity Supply' leaflet.

### **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service**

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is seeking feedback about the level of council tax contribution for the coming year and how satisfied you are with the service they provide.

Please [click here](#) to have your say and complete the online survey.

To request an alternative format, please contact the Communications and Engagement team on **01392 872347**. The closing date is **18 December 2020**.

### **HM Coastguard Watchet**

#### **Safety Message regarding the coastal defences at Blue Anchor**

With the arrival of the rock armour for the coastal defences at Blue Anchor Beach

on Monday 9 November, HM Coastguard Watchet are aware that this will draw attention from curious beach visitors. The dropping off point away from the shoreline is temporary so the rocks have not been placed in position where they will be stable, and on low water will leave large gaps that children may climb into. However, if they or animals become stuck the Coastguard will have trouble rescuing them.

Please keep dogs on leads and keep children away, and do not climb/fish on the rocks. These rocks will be covered by the high tides until moved into final position.

Please do not be tempted to go out to the rock armour and watch / look from afar instead. In addition the natural movement of the mud and sand will be impacted so there maybe patches of deep mud in places previously where there was not, all along the sea front.

Remember if you become stuck in the mud, don't struggle, spread your weight (lie down) and call out for help.

**For onlookers do not enter the mud, dial 999 for the Coastguard immediately.**

Please share with your friends/family to avoid an incident happening on our coastline.

## **First Bus – Coronavirus Update**

Following the UK Government's announcement of a second lockdown from Thursday 5 November, First Bus want to reassure customers that they are working with Government and local authorities to ensure their buses are running to take people to school, university and enable those who need to travel to do so.

### **Service levels**

For the vast majority of services First Bus don't expect to make any changes, but if they do, you'll find the latest information for your local area on the [website](#) which will be kept up to date.

### **Keeping you safe**

First Bus want to make sure that every passenger is confident when travelling with them. That's why they are working extra hard behind the scenes with an enhanced daily cleaning regime. Here's a reminder of what you can do to protect yourself and those around you:

- **Wear a face covering:** Wearing a face covering on public transport is mandatory, unless exempt, to help stop the spread of Coronavirus.
- **Keep the windows open for additional ventilation:** It is appreciated that the weather is turning colder with winter approaching but leaving the windows open helps passengers to stay safe, so don't forget to dress warmly on your travels.
- **Use the First Bus App:** Not only can you buy your tickets in advance, but you can plan your journey, check live bus times, track your bus and check live seat capacity. To help you travel with confidence First Bus have developed

new functionality in the [Mobile App](#). With the latest update, version you can now track your bus live on a map so you know exactly where it is and when it will get to your stop. What's more, each bus now displays in real time how many empty seats, and wheelchair spaces there are - to help you plan your journey.

- **Pay contactless:** To avoid handling money, go contactless and pay either with a contactless card, Google or Apple Pay.
- **Keep your distance from others:** To help you keep a safe distance from other passengers, First Bus have marked out which seats aren't available to sit on. For more information visit the Coronavirus page [here](#).

## Community Support – What help is out there?

### Voluntary and Community Sector Support

#### Covid-19 Community Champions

Spark Somerset is working in partnership with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership) to set up the Covid Community Champions Network. The network will give local people a role in helping their community to get up to date information and make the right choices to stay healthy.

After attending a short online training course, Covid Community Champions will be able to help their family, friends and the wider community to understand the latest guidance around Covid-19, and signpost to other health and wellbeing support. This can be done informally as the Champions go about their day to day lives. Champions will have the opportunity to attend regular meetings, where they'll get to know the other Champions, keep up to date, and feedback about how things are going where they live and work.

Spark Somerset are particularly keen to involve people living or working with communities that might find it hard to get the right information about how to stay happy and healthy at the moment, and areas where Covid infections rates are highest in Somerset.

If you, or someone you know who might be interested in becoming a Covid Champion, you can find more information and can sign up [here](#).

If you'd like to discuss how your organisation might support the network, please don't hesitate to get in touch with [Spark Somerset](#).

#### Talking Cafe Live

If you were not already aware, The Talking Cafe is a Multi-Agency information cafe providing free advice and support to the public. During the pandemic, services have been moved online and can be accessed via [Facebook](#) or you can now watch and share replays of previously held Talking Cafes on [YouTube](#).

The Talking Café held on 10 November looked at Employment and Redundancy Support for Individuals. Whether you have been made redundant, or are about to be, are seeking the next job opportunity, working on your employability skills or just beginning your journey in the world of work, you will find lots of helpful advice and information from the panel of employment support experts in this webinar. Please [click here](#) to watch a replay of the Talking Café Live.

## **Surviving Winter Appeal**

**Help Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to help more isolated and vulnerable older people this year.**

SCF's Surviving Winter appeal encourages people who don't need their Winter Fuel Payment to donate some or all of it to help local older people. Surviving Winter helps around 500 elderly people living in Somerset through the cold winter months, thanks to generous local donors who, last year, donated over £100,000 to the appeal.

If you would like to donate to Surviving Winter, or find out more about the appeal please [click here](#) or call **01749 344949**.

## **Health and Welfare**

### **New guidance on care home visits**

All care home residents in England should be allowed to receive visits from their family and friends in a Covid-secure way – with social distancing and PPE – following [new guidance](#) to be used while national restrictions are in place from Thursday 5 November.

The guidance will enable care home providers, families and local professionals to work together to find the right balance between the benefits of visiting on wellbeing and quality of life, and the risk of transmission of Covid-19 to social care staff and vulnerable residents. It will set out clear principles for how visits are conducted – with arrangements to be adapted from home to home, based on the needs of their residents and taking into consideration factors such as layout and facilities – and reiterates the importance of ensuring social distancing and proper PPE use is observed.

### **Think about the drink and your mental health**

Everyone is encouraged to think and talk openly about alcohol, how it effects their lives and its link to mental health during this Alcohol Awareness Week (16 - 22 November).

A poll released earlier this year from Alcohol Change UK showed one in five of those surveyed said they had drunk alcohol to handle stress or anxiety during lockdown. Of those who drank more heavily during lockdown (nine plus units on each drinking day), 40% had drunk as a response to stress or anxiety. As lockdown eased over the summer, two in three (66%) expected to continue drinking as they had been during lockdown (49%), or even drink more (17%).

Around 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year and drinking too much is linked to increasing the risk. Many of us are unaware of the link

between alcohol and poor mental health. Yet drinking too much or too often can mask or enhance underlying mental health problems – such as anxiety and depression – and prevent them from being properly addressed.

Please [click here](#) to read more and to discover some alternative ways to cope during these challenging times.

## **The Somerset Mindline**

Open 24 hours a day for mental health and emotional wellbeing support: **01823 276 892**.

Some people really need someone to talk to, to get things off their chest as they don't have someone to talk to about whatever is on their mind. Some people may feel desperate and don't know what to do about a situation or where they can go for help or support in Somerset. Some people may feel isolated or alone and really want to talk about their day or their problems with a person in confidence. Others may be worried about their family or friends and don't know where they can find help. Some may have a low self-esteem or feel worthless. [Mindline](#) is also for people that may just want some emotional support and just want a chat with a friendly ear to talk about their day.

## **Please Download the NHS Test and Trace app**

You can now [download the NHS Test and Trace app](#) and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise.

The more people who download the app and contribute to the data will assist with monitoring and tracking the spread of the virus; this will enable Public Health England to allocate resources accordingly. The app will also 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.

## **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.

## **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. I was told to shield during the first national lockdown, should I be shielding now?**

**A.** The Government has issued new guidance for people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you will

previously have received a letter from the NHS or from your GP telling you this. You may have been advised to shield in the past. Advice on shielding has now changed and [new guidance issued](#) to provide extra information to help you protect yourself from the virus.

**Q. I was alarmed to read that my car insurance could be void in the event of an accident and claim if I was making a non-essential journey during lockdown.**

**Who decides what is essential driving?**

**A.** Essential travel is anything that is set out as 'essential' by central government. Information about the latest lockdown, set out on 5 November, is available [here](#). Insurers will honour a genuine accident claim, however, drivers should follow Government advice and only make essential journeys.

**Q. I'm reading back through some old articles online and some of the links to further reading do not work. How can I get around this problem to find more information and access websites etc?**

**A.** A broken link / [hyperlink](#) is a link to a webpage that doesn't work. If a user types in or clicks on the link, they will be directed to a 404 page or error message. Links may be broken for a variety of reasons, including the URL (the address of a webpage) being mistyped, the webpage no longer being online, the page's URL having changed, or the linked page having restricted access. In this fast changing world, news and information changes all the time, sometimes causing broken links to occur.

In the event of a link not working, it is advised to type the website into the search browser and navigate to the required information via the Homepage. Should this approach not work, it is possible the content has been removed or superseded.

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Action Fraud**

#### **Investment Fraud**

Action Fraud is informing the public of how to protect themselves from investment fraud, after reports spiked following the first national lockdown caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Between September 2019 and September 2020, Action Fraud received just over 17,000 reports of investment fraud, amounting to **£657.4m** in reported losses. This is a 28% increase when compared to the same period last year. Furthermore, reports spiked in May, June, July, August and September 2020 as the nation adjusted to life after lockdown.

To read the full article please [click here](#).

## **Credit Card Fraud**

As people have embraced social distancing as a way to slow the spread of the coronavirus, there has been a bigger shift to shopping online and browsing of the bigger retailers. This means a rise of e-commerce payments and also a corresponding rise in fraudsters who are increasingly using pilfered credit-card numbers and phishing attacks to prey on overwhelmed consumers and banks.

Do you check your credit card statements for unusual purchases? Would you say you protect yourself adequately while shopping online?

Please [click here](#) to learn more about credit card fraud, how to protect yourself from becoming a victim of fraud and what to do should you notice fraudulent charges on your account. You will also find two fact sheets attached for your ease of reference.

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

### **Latest Facebook Live**

Police & Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens put your questions about coronavirus, policing the pandemic and large gatherings to Chief Constable Andy Marsh in the latest Facebook Live. If you missed it, you can watch a replay [here](#).

## **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.

**#StayAtHome**

**#ProtectTheNHS**

**#SaveLives**

### ***Attachment:***

*WPD Planned Interruptions to your Electricity Supply PDF*

*Identity Crime Fact Sheet*

*Banking & Credit Card Fraud Fact Sheet*