

# Somerset West and Taunton

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

### **Issue 43. Week ending 31/01/21**

**#StayAtHome    #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives**

It is also important to remember the Coronavirus basics

- **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 pandemic 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 new claims process to help businesses seeking government grants**

SWT has now implemented a simplified application process to help businesses access the latest tranche of Government lockdown grants.

The new process covers the mandatory and discretionary grant schemes offered to businesses impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions during the second and third national lockdowns, and tier 2 to 4 affected areas.

Although the variety of schemes are complex, each with differing criteria and time-limited application periods, the new process has been streamlined to accommodate two fundamental groups of applicants – **those who have received a support grant since 5 November 2020 and those who have not.**

Conveniently, those who claimed a support grant from 5 November are not required to re-register. The Council has already contacted these businesses inviting them to re-apply via a simple email process and where eligible, payment will be made as soon as possible. Previous applicants which have not been contacted, are advised to check their 'spam' or 'junk' folders along with their email security settings.

Businesses which have not received a support grant since 5 November, regardless of whether they pay business rates and including those who previously applied but did not meet the eligibility criteria, may now be entitled to support.

These applicants are encouraged to register their interest using a simple online form to determine their potential entitlement to the various schemes via the Council's website: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/business-rates/covid-business-support-grants/>

Once registered, the Council's grants team will work out whether any support grants apply and where appropriate, the team will contact them to confirm some final eligibility details.

Applicants within this group may have provided their information previously to receive a grant during the first national lockdown (payable from March 2020), however, more up-to-date information is now required to accurately identify eligibility. The new process clearly states what documents are required before starting a fresh application. Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT press release.

If you would like to be kept informed of regular Covid business support grants please sign up for the SWT [business newsletter](#).

## **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:

- Monday 1 February – **Special Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 27 January)

- Wednesday 3 February – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 29 January)
- Thursday 4 February – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 1 February)
- Tuesday 9 February – **Special Executive (Budget Setting)**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 4 February)

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. Redundancy support for employers and employees**

SWT is fully committed to supporting businesses and their employees who are facing redundancy during this very challenging and difficult time. Working with partners including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Somerset County Council (SCC), SWT can provide a package of support to help businesses looking to restructure and make redundancies in their workforce and for the employees directly affected by the changes. For further information please [click here](#).

### **4. BREXIT: The new rules are here**

The UK has left the EU - to understand how this now affects your business, the Government has published online guidance on how to implement the necessary changes from 1 January 2021.

The [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website is the central site for guidance aimed at businesses and individuals.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) release a weekly email bulletin covering business readiness updates and announcements. Businesses can sign up for the [BEIS bulletin](#) to be alerted of any changes.

### **5. Commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day**

On Holocaust Memorial Day, SWT remembered the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi Persecution and in genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Stockholm Declaration was read and a candle was lit in commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day; a time to remember the victims of the Holocaust, and reflect on our responsibility to be a force against hatred and persecution.

Please [click here](#) to watch a replay on the SWT commemoration.

## **6. Work to begin at Norton Hillfort**

Norton Fitzwarren Hillfort is one of the hidden archaeological gems of Somerset whose origins can be traced back over 5,000 years. SWT has now secured significant funding from Historic England to begin a programme of works to enhance both the archaeology and ecology of the site. This is in addition to funding received in 2018 for SWT to acquire the site.

Norton Hillfort contains important archaeological remains that require management over the coming years in order to preserve and protect its ancient earthworks, enhance the site and ultimately remove it from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

The first phase of work to reverse many years of neglect will start this winter with scrub clearance and tree management in order to open up the site for future use and to bring the site back into good order.

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

## **7. Fox's Field secured for the community**

SWT has acquired the green space adjacent to Tonedale Mill, Wellington, following its designation as an Asset of Community Value. The site known as Fox's Field is vital for the setting of the Grade II\* listed Tonedale Mill complex which the Council is also acting to protect.

Following the acquisition SWT has been working alongside Wellington Mills Community Interest Company (WMCIC) and Transition Town Wellington (TTW) to protect the Field as an open, green space for the whole community. Community consultation for the site will begin shortly by the WMCIC and TTW with the support of SWT. It is hoped that following this consultation a formal agreement for the future of the field will be agreed between parties.

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

## **8. Wellington's Tone Works gets grant from Culture Recovery Fund**

As owners of the building, SWT has been awarded a grant of £348,420 by Historic England as part of the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. This will allow the first phase of work to commence to bring the Tone Works site back to life and give it a new role in the community.

This unique textile site in Somerset, established in 1796 is a well-preserved cloth 'finishing works' of the Fox Brothers textile company, where the final stages in the production of fabrics such as serge were carried out.

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

## **9. Taunton's new 2040 Vision aims to raise more than a billion pounds to regenerate County Town**

SWT has launched a major new campaign to promote Taunton as the best place to live, work and do business in the UK. As part of its Garden Town status the launch of Taunton Vision 2040 invites people to "Invest in the Future" with an ambitious plan for Somerset's County Town.

Hi-tech animation and new drone footage highlight current and future projects and promote council owned sites that form part of the overall masterplan. This is backed by a detailed document giving more details on what Garden Town status means for Taunton and the opportunities for investors.

Key to the regeneration will be bringing the River Tone back to the heart of Taunton, with riverside living, working and leisure opportunities, building on the multi-million pound Coal Orchard project.

The video and full Vision 2040 prospectus will be available to view on the SWT website from Wednesday 27 January along with the opportunity to comment. Taunton's Vision 2040 will target businesses, people and investors in the UK and overseas.

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

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

In Somerset, the Councils have responded to over 11,000 phone calls on the Coronavirus Support Helpline and have emailed or written to over 22,000 residents shielding to advise them of the helpline and to make contact if they need support.

This 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](#).

## **11. REMINDER- Tenant Strategic Group Elections 2021**

Election information packs are being sent to tenants containing information about how the Tenant's Strategic Group works, alongside an application form. To apply: simply complete and post your paper application form to SWT or use the online [form](#). Applications close on **8 February 2021**; and please note that applications received after this date will not be considered.

The election will be a combined postal and online ballot run by Civica who are very experienced in conducting elections. After the ballot closes on **30 March 2021** the votes will be counted and the ten candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected to serve on the Tenants' Strategic Group.

If you require another copy of the application form or are having any issues applying, please ring **0300 304 8000** and ask for a member of the Housing Performance Team or email [housingperformance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:housingperformance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

## **12. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)**

### **IMPORTANT- 6am start for collections from Monday 1 February**

From **Monday 1 February**, waste collections will start at 6am rather than 7am to help crews cope with covid-19 absences and to further protect staff. SWP is asking householders to put their recycling and rubbish out early for at least the next month. Residents are urged to put containers out the night before collections, or before 6am at on the day.

SWP is also warning that it will not always be able to return for missed recycling and garden waste collections as more staff isolate in line with guidance. The early starts are being introduced to further reduce staff numbers in depots at any one time – minimising any risk of contact between crew bubbles. Set-off times are already staggered but this will spread them out over a longer period and give crews a head start with work that may take longer if staff are absent.

Collection crews work in tightly-controlled team bubbles; the whole bubble isolates if a member tests positive, is in contact with someone who tests positive, or is symptomatic. This means far higher staff absences than expected, plus unpredictable daily changes as teams isolate or return to work, and crews are reallocated to maintain services.

In the first three weeks of January, covid-19 contributed to the loss of nearly 800 operational days, compared to 58 lost days in December. This after a festive period where many staff worked extended hours to cope with an increase in waste of more than 50%. Missed collections are usually returned for the following day, but this is becoming increasingly difficult. Rubbish collections will not be affected, but recycling and garden waste could be. Where crews cannot return the following day, people will need to take containers in until their next collection.



## **It's time to clean your handles. Keep your community and your crews safe**

In households with people who are infected or have Coronavirus symptoms, their personal waste should be stored securely in disposable rubbish bags. These should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the home for at least 72 hours (three days) before being put in the usual rubbish outside the house for the usual collections.

**You should wash or sanitise hands before and after handling waste containers, disinfect container handles, and maintain social distance from all waste staff.**

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 Report**

The weather has been very changeable recently and in the short space of a few days SCC Highways have had everything from heavy rain and high winds (“Storm Christoph”) to snow and ice. The weekend of 22 – 25 January was particularly challenging when overnight snow on Saturday turned to ice on the Sunday. Snow ploughs were even deployed on the higher routes of Exmoor. There was then a rapid turnaround of wind direction and, with much milder weather moving in, these difficult road conditions did not last too long. It looks like this is the sort of weather that we can expect more of as we head into February.

Meanwhile, on the construction front, work is continuing well on two schemes on the **A358 corridor between Taunton and Williton**. These are the permanent repairs to the collapsed verge and embankment at **Combe Florey**. Here SCC Highways are placing wire cages filled with large stones (known as gabion baskets) below the edge of the carriageway to support it and also to resist future erosion from the stream running alongside the road. Due to the space required to carry out this work, there is **a full temporary road closure of the A358, in operation for 24 hours per day**. Work is scheduled to be completed on **12 February**. Somerset County Council apologise for any disruption that this may cause whilst these essential works are being carried out and thank the residents and road users of Somerset West and Taunton for their patience.

SCC Highways are also continuing with Phase 2 of the drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**. This work is also being done under the cover of a temporary road closure.

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

## Useful links to report faults

Throughout winter, 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.](#)

## REMINDER- First Bus Somerset A358 Combe Florey – Service Update

For three weeks from **Monday 25 January 2021** the **A358 between Combe Florey and Williton** will be closed to allow Highways to rectify the issues along that stretch of road. This means buses will divert via Raleighs Cross as this is the prescribed diversionary route.

In partnership with Somerset County Council, First Bus will operate a shuttle service for the areas who will be left without a service. **This will operate between Williton and West Bagborough.** The diversion is likely to cause delays of up to 20 minutes. To read the full press release and the timetable for the shuttle bus, please [click here](#).

## Service Information - Lockdown #3

First Group is making temporary changes to some buses in response to the national lockdown. Some of their buses in Somerset will run slightly less often due to lower numbers of people travelling.

Services will revert to similar patterns operated in the first lockdown.

**Town Services 1, 4, 6, 7, in Taunton** will reduce by half: 1, every 40 minutes and the rest hourly Monday to Friday, no changes to the Saturday service.

**Network Services 21A and 28**, will be hourly for the duration of the day. Basically operating the current Saturday timetable Monday to Saturday.

Please [click here](#) for the revised timetables.

## Idverde

### Community Investment Fund

The [idverde Community Investment Fund](#) aims to empower local people to deliver sought after projects that improve their local green space or the public realm, enhance the local environment, and boost the wellbeing of local people.

Idverde knows there is no shortage of great ideas and enthusiasm for such projects in local communities, but a lack of cash can prevent great ideas from reaching their potential. That's why Idverde launched its Community Investment Fund, which grants up to £40,000 per year to support community-led projects in the areas where they operate. Funding can be granted for a variety of projects and activities, including promotion, marketing, and education, as well as practical equipment and running costs.



The fund is open for applications from formally constituted, not for profit groups, such as charities, volunteer groups, forums, sports teams, societies and schools. Your project must be based in areas where Idverde currently operates a contract – [check out the main contract locations here](#), but if you've seen the Idverde vans driving around, you're in luck!

To find out more about the Community Investment Fund please [click here](#).

## **Somerset Skills and Learning (SSL)**

### **Free Online Workshops**

Are you finding it challenging to look after your family's wellbeing during lockdown? In partnership with Somerset Skills & Learning, Young Somerset are hosting a series of free online workshops to give families the right tools and advice to be able to support their wellbeing during lockdown.

The course includes four consecutive 2 hour sessions and will take place weekly on Monday evenings 6pm to 8pm. This is a rolling course; the first course will begin on **Monday 1 February** and will be repeated monthly until July. If you are unable to attend all four sessions, you can still enrol on the course. Please contact [ruthgavenlock@youngsomerset.org.uk](mailto:ruthgavenlock@youngsomerset.org.uk) if you have any questions.

To enrol on the course and for more information about each sessions please visit: [www.sslcourses.co.uk/courses/course/looking-after-your-families-during-lockdown-young-somerset/](http://www.sslcourses.co.uk/courses/course/looking-after-your-families-during-lockdown-young-somerset/)

### **Other online courses – For February 2021**

SSL are offering **Community Learning Courses** and workshops designed to support and develop new skills, build confidence, motivation and resilience. The Community Learning Workshops and Courses are free for anybody aged 19+, who live in Somerset and lived in the UK for the last three years.

SSL's goal is to support health and wellbeing and to develop stronger communities.

This February the focus is on health & wellbeing, self-development and career support, so treat yourself to some self-care and take steps towards a better future.

To find out more about the range of courses on offer please [click here](#).

### **ShopAppy – Boosting your Business Webinar**

**Thursday 4 February at 10am**

Local businesses will share their insights on what support they need, what challenges they are facing, trends local businesses are seeing and how they are adapting for life during and after Covid-19. Most importantly, the businesses will be offering their advice on how councils and place makers can better engage them on initiatives towards local economic and community recovery.

To book your place please [click here](#).

## **Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service**

## **Public Consultation**

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service is redesigning their website and would welcome feedback to improve the site in the future. Please [click here](#) to take the short survey.

## **The challenge of road safety**

Keeping you safe on the county's roads is a challenge for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service. Devon and Somerset has one of the largest networks of rural roads in the UK and these are used by thousands of visitors every year, as well as our resident communities.

Attending road traffic collisions accounts for 7% of the work Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service undertakes. Not only do they manage incidents when they happen, but they pride themselves on being at the forefront of road safety campaigning, in an effort to prevent Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), from happening in the first place.

For useful links relating to the topics below, please [click here](#).

- Driving in flood water (PDF)
- Driving in snow and ice (PDF)
- National Charity for Road Crash Victims website - <http://www.roadpeace.org/>
- [World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims](#)

## **The Automobile Association (AA)**

### **Coping with cold, snow and ice when driving**

The roads can be dangerous in winter when there's snow, ice or sleet. A top tip from the Automobile Association (AA) is to take it slow. [Stopping distances](#) can be 10 times longer when it's icy. Gentle manoeuvres and slow speeds are the key to safe [driving in ice and snow](#).

Accidents are more common in the winter when road conditions are challenging. Please [click here](#) for further advice and guidance on how to stay safe on snowy and icy roads and avoid a breakdown this winter. During National Lockdown it is vitally important that you only make essential journeys.

## **Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

### **Stay Wise – Saving Lives through Education**

Are you teaching remotely or home schooling?

If you haven't already, check out the new StayWise digital safety education platform which launched this week, packed with FREE resources for teachers and parents to help children (aged 3-11) learn about safety through the national curriculum.

StayWise brings together resource from all our emergency services with national safety charities all in one place – it's your one-stop safety shop with lesson plans, videos, games and activity sheets with lifesaving potential. To visit the Staywise website and view the resources on offer please [click here](#).

## **HM Coastguard Minehead**

**Beware of ordnance on the beach**

Remember ordnance can come in all shapes and size. They all have the potential to be dangerous. Don't take the risk, call the Coastguard.

It's common to find all types of objects washed up on the shore after storms - our coastguard teams have been called out a few times around the UK coast to investigate reports of suspicious or out of the ordinary objects over recent weeks. Most are harmless, but as well as unexploded military ordnance, military flares and discarded marine flares can wash up on the shore too. Because these items can be so dangerous, please be careful. If you're unsure about an object, do not touch it, move it or take it home. Let the experts decide if it's safe. Move to a safe spot and call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Use an app like [what3words](#) to pinpoint the location for easy reference and access.

And remember, follow your nation's guidance at all times and take extra care at the coast. [#999Coastguard](#)

### **The Countryside Code - short 'Covid-19' online version**

With more people using Somerset's public rights of way for their daily exercise during lockdown, walkers are being asked to make sure that livestock is not disturbed by dogs.

Dog owners are reminded to act responsibly and keep their dogs under close control. When walking your dog in areas used by other people it is advised that dogs are kept on a lead if a physical distance of two metres cannot be adhered to.

Care must also be taken when near animals and their young. Please [click here](#) to read a useful guidance in the Countryside Code on GOV.UK. You can also find the Countryside Code- short 'Covid-19' version attached to this newsletter.

The current Government advice during lockdown is that you can leave your home to exercise and spend time outdoors for recreation, however this should be limited to once per day and should be in your local area.

## **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Quantock Hills**

### **Travelling to outdoor spaces**

Social distancing and some restrictions remain in place but critically AONB Quantock Hills would like to highlight the section on the Countryside Code, please remember:

- Leave no trace of your visit and take all of your litter home.
- Keep dogs under effective control and on a lead when you are around farm animals and clean up after them - read more: <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people...>
- Leave gates as you find them, follow instructions on signs and remember to wash or sanitise your hands regularly.
- Keep to footpaths/access land and follow signs where they suggest alternative routes.

Please [click here](#) to subscribe to the AONB Quantock Hills newsletter for updates and news from the Quantock Hills.

# Community Support – What help is out there?

## Voluntary and Community Sector Support

### More support for families in lockdown

Somerset County Council (SCC) has allocated a further £427,000 of funding to help schools provide families with food support during this lockdown. During term time, the Department for Education (DfE) has asked schools to provide meal options for all pupils who are in school – including vulnerable children and the children of critical workers – as well as those children being home-schooled who are eligible for Free School Meals.

The Council recognises that some children are not eligible for Free School Meals but for one reason or another would benefit from receiving food support. Therefore, this funding can also be used by schools to support a wider range of children.

Before the February half term, all schools in Somerset have been provided with funding from the Winter Covid Grant scheme for every child who receives Free School Meals. This funding can be used to provide vouchers or food.

The decision on whether to provide boxes or vouchers rests with the individual schools. However, SCC is working with them to ensure that Somerset food boxes meet or exceed the DfE standard.

### Healthy Start – Food Vouchers

Healthy Start is a Government scheme to improve the health of low-income pregnant women and families on benefits and tax credits.

Vouchers are posted out every four weeks. They can be spent on milk, fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried, and tinned pulses, or infant formula milk in a wide variety of local shops and supermarkets, and with milkmen that have registered to take part in the scheme.

Please [click here](#) for further information and to find out if you qualify.

### Place2be's Children's Mental Health Week: 1-7 February 2021

[Place2Be](#) is a children's mental health charity that provides counselling and mental health support and training in UK schools, using tried and tested methods backed by research.

The theme of this year's Place2be's Children's Mental Health Week is [Express Yourself](#). Expressing yourself is about finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that make you feel good.

Young Somerset, in partnership with Somerset County Council, have created some resources to encourage children and young people to creatively express themselves throughout Children's Mental Health Week. This is a great way for teachers and parents to incorporate awareness around self-expression.

[7 Ways to Creatively Express Yourself](#) - This resource gives young people some creative ideas for each day of the week to encourage them to explore how they express themselves.

[Express Yourself Activity Booklet](#) - This resource is designed for children and young people to fill out during the week. You can either print this activity book out or complete electronically. It includes activities and explores lots of different ways that you can express yourself.

Young Somerset would love to see all the ways children and young people have got involved with creatively expressing themselves during Children's Mental Health Week. To be in with the chance of winning a prize, make sure you send what you've been up to (or your completed workbook) to [lydiaburton@youngsomerset.org.uk](mailto:lydiaburton@youngsomerset.org.uk) / or tag them on social media @youngsomerset

### **Advice for people struggling to pay essential bills**

The Government has updated the advice for those in difficulty with utility bills, or repayment commitments on credit cards, loans and mortgages, as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

The guidance sets out what people should do if they are struggling to pay bills and sets out the action the Government has taken with different utility providers, as well as loan, credit card, insurance and mortgage providers.

The Government has extended the deadline for applying for a mortgage payment holiday to 31 March 2021. Please [click here](#) for more information and further advice.

### **Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

#### **Talking Café Live**

During one of their live sessions this week, CCS had their HomeFirst Agent, Russell Pearce look at an issue that affects many people: What happens when you need extra support after leaving hospital? How do you get help with hospital discharge? How can you source a package of care around your needs? Are you a carer and concerned about you or the person you care for?

If you missed the live session, you can watch a replay [here](#).

All Talking Cafes can also be watched after they have aired via YouTube - just visit [www.somersetagents.org/talking-cafes](http://www.somersetagents.org/talking-cafes) to see the previous sessions.

### **Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

#### **Grants & Funding**

Somerset Community Foundation is here to help you and your organisation during the coronavirus outbreak. If you need to adapt or postpone an activity that they have funded in response to the outbreak then please contact SCF. In most cases they will be able to agree such changes.

Somerset is a wonderful place to live, but SCF want to make it even better by helping the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector thrive. SCF work with over 84 local donors to offer grants and social investments to do that. Each one

tackles disadvantage, transforms lives, and creates vibrant and inclusive communities.

To find out more information about different **funding opportunities**, who can apply, when and how please [click here](#). SCF encourage you to take some time to read this information. They also encourage you to pick up the phone, or send an email. If you have a great idea and need funding to make it a reality, then SCF want to hear from you.

## **Health and Welfare**

### **Second large vaccination centre at Bath and West Showground**

This week, the Royal Bath and West Showground started to be used to vaccinate local residents and frontline health and care workers from the highest priority groups. This site will be open seven days a week, 8am to 8pm as part of an additional wave of 'large' vaccination centres opening across the country. You can [read more on the NHS CCG website](#)

### **Vaccinations: Please be patient**

NHS staff and partners are doing an incredible job delivering what it is the largest vaccination programme in our history, at the same time as dealing with a new admission for Covid-19 every 30 seconds, but they need the public to play their part too:

- please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, they will contact you;
- when they do contact you, please attend your booked appointments at exactly the time you're asked to, so that queues in this cold weather can be avoided;
- and please continue to follow all the guidance in place to control the virus and save lives, even if you have already had your vaccine.

For regular updates and further information please [click here](#).

### **Latest Vaccination data for Somerset**

You can now check Somerset's vaccination data on the Coronavirus dashboard. The information provided by the NHS will be added every Friday. Please [click here](#) to view the latest figures relating to doses that have been administered in Somerset. The dashboard provides an overview of Coronavirus cases, a map, the R number and more detailed district-level information.

### **Latest Somerset Covid-19 Catch-up**

#### **Clinton Rogers finds out more about vaccinations**

For the latest Covid update film, Clinton Rogers was given access to film at the racecourse where he interviewed the Centre Manager, Helen McEvansoneya. The interview answers many of the common questions people have about the vaccination, gives viewers insight into what to expect when they arrive at the centre, and will hopefully alleviate any anxiety felt by people invited to receive their vaccination. You can watch the video [here](#).

## **Every Mind Matters**



You might feel like there's been lots to worry about recently. It's normal to feel anxious at times, but there are lots of ways to manage. For advice on understanding, challenging and dealing with anxious thoughts, please [click here](#).

### **Need to seek help during these tough times?**

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don't have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help in these tough times:

- Samaritans - 116 123
- CALM - 0800 58 58 58
- ChildLine - 0800 1111
- Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
- Mind - 0300 123 3393
- National Domestic Abuse helpline - 0808 2000 247

**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**

[Somerset Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](#)

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

[Public Health England](#)

[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

## **FAQS**

**Q. I'm currently working from home and I'm trying my best to manage my children's education. It's difficult to find a balance and feel productive. Do you have any useful tips to help me manage this situation?**

**A.** If you're working from home with children, it can be difficult to find balance and feel productive. Speak to your employer about flexibility and if it's possible to work different hours. But remember, it's important for you to not overstretch yourself and take care of your own mental wellbeing. Make sure you know about family friendly policies that can help spread the load.

Find a suitable place to work while being close to your children to supervise them. Having a set work space helps all the family to know you're working. Take regular breaks to rest and relax. Whilst it's important to have routine and structure, be prepared to adapt and be flexible to suit your family needs.

Please [click here](#) to find more online resources to help you plan your child's day and take some of the pressure off yourself.

**Q. I've been asked to do a Covid-19 test. What should I expect?**

**A.** There are two types of test currently being used to detect if someone has Covid-19:

- **Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests**  
PCR tests detect the RNA (ribonucleic acid, the genetic material) of a virus. PCR tests are the most reliable Covid-19 tests. It takes some time to get the results because they are usually processed in a laboratory.
- **Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests**  
LFD tests detect proteins in the coronavirus and work in a similar way to a pregnancy test. They are simple and quick to use. LFD tests are not as accurate as PCR tests and are mainly used in people who do not have symptoms of Covid-19. **Anyone who has a positive LFD test should have a PCR test to confirm the result within 48 hours.**

**Q. I was recently in contact with somebody who tested positive for Covid-19. My test came back negative. Do I still need to self-isolate?**

**A.** YES. Your isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days. This means that if, for example, your symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month (or if you did not have symptoms but your first positive Covid-19 test was taken on the 15th), your isolation period ends at 11:59pm on the 25th.

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Safer Somerset Partnership & Domestic Abuse Newsletter**

Please find attached the winter edition of the Safer Somerset Partnership & Domestic Abuse newsletter.

### **REMINDER- Covid-19 Vaccine Fraud**

Criminals are using the Covid-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages and emails letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

Remember, **the vaccine is free of charge.** At no point will you be asked to pay.

- The NHS will never ask you for your bank account or card details.
- The NHS will never ask you for your PIN or banking password.
- The NHS will never arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine.
- The NHS will never ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips.

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

## **Update on A&SP Patrols during National Lockdown**

The police have been patrolling on the Quantock Hills and have been dealing with people looking to go sledging. Unfortunately a few vehicles have been getting stuck in the snow, which then believe it or not, causes more demand on A&SP and other services in trying to free them. Police are still receiving reports of mini buses and vehicles arriving at **Lydeard Hill Car Park** and having difficulty in the snow. We are still in a lockdown, and you should only be travelling if it is essential.

## **Taunton Neighbourhood Policing Update**

### **Accident on Buncombe Hill, Taunton**

Initial reports indicated there was a multi-vehicle collision on Buncombe Hill, Taunton resulting in persons trapped. A multi-agency response was mobilised with 19 Firefighters, 3 Ambulances, Ambulance doctors, 1 Air Ambulance, 2 Roads Policing Officers, 2 Police Officers and 1 PCSO in attendance.

Thankfully it only turned out to be one car ditched; but with several other vehicles stuck in the snow. All this for an uninsured driver taking friends for a drive, who ran out of talent in the snow. The vehicle has been seized and Covid penalty tickets issued. Thankfully there were no injuries sustained but this could all have been avoided. **#StayAtHome #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives**

Please [click here](#) to keep up to date with the Taunton Neighbourhood Policing team.

## **How key agencies are supporting our NHS during Covid-19 health emergency**

With the NHS under extreme pressure in the midst of the most critical stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has sought to provide assistance where possible to assist health colleagues on the frontline.

The LRF – which is made up of emergency services, local authorities, NHS organisations and other key agencies – is meeting multiple times a week to provide additional resources to tackle the health emergency and keep the public safe. These range from offering extra staff to tackling logistical challenges as part of the vaccine roll-out. Please [click here](#) for further news.

## **A message from Deputy Police Crime Commissioner, John Smith 'We must support our heroes in the health service'**

"The news of the vaccine is optimistic, but we must continue to follow the lockdown regulations set out by central government to **reduce the spread of the virus**. The pressure on our hospitals here in the South West is real, and in recent weeks we have seen the highest number of Covid related hospital admissions since the start of the pandemic.

We continue to work with our local partners to ensure that we **support victims during these difficult times**. Our work with domestic abuse services, the young victim's service and many other hard-working organisations helps victims receive the support they so urgently need and deserve. As a part of this we are currently inviting organisations to work with us to develop an intervention to educate and reduce hate

crime offending in our communities. Hate crime is an abhorrent crime that will not be tolerated and we are working hard to reduce such offences across Avon and Somerset..." Please [click here](#) to read Deputy Police Crime Commissioner, John Smith's full message.

## **#StayHomeSaveLives**

Is your trip out really necessary? Bending the rules costs lives. Your local neighbourhood teams have been out spreading this very important message. "Stay at home and play your part. Protect the NHS. Save lives".

[#Covid19](#) [#stayhomesavelives](#) [#yourcommunity](#)

## **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**

### ***Attachments:***

*The Short Covid-19 Countryside Code PDF*

*Safer Somerset Partnership & Domestic Abuse Newsletter PDF*