

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 45. Week ending 14/02/2021

#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. Call for people aged 70 and over to contact NHS for COVID jab

People aged 70 and over who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19, and who would like to be, are being asked to contact the NHS to arrange a jab.

Until now the NHS has asked people to wait until they are contacted to help ensure that those who are most vulnerable are protected first – and that remains the case for most people. However, to ensure absolutely everyone is offered the vaccine, people aged 70 and over can now contact the NHS so they can be vaccinated by the middle of this month.

The easiest way to arrange a vaccination is through the national booking service which can be accessed at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination.

Anyone unable to book online can **call 119 free of charge**, anytime between 7am and 11pm seven days a week. If a suitable and convenient slot is not available people can also call their GP practice.

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:

- Thursday 18 February – **Full Council (Budget Setting)**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 15 February)
- Tuesday 23 February – **Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 18 February)
- Wednesday 24 February – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 19 February)
- Thursday 25 February – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 22 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 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. SWT sets out budget proposals

SWT's Full Council will be recommended to support a balanced budget for the coming financial year despite the challenges of COVID-19. The emphasis during 2020/21 has been on supporting residents and businesses throughout the Coronavirus crisis while delivering frontline services and taking opportunities to kick-start economic recovery.

The proposed budget for 2021/22 will allow SWT to continue providing this level of support whilst allowing the Council to press ahead with ambitious plans to invest in the future.

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

4. Splash Point Wall repairs finished

SWT has completed a £1m project to rebuild the Splash Point sea defence wall in Watchet. The Council made temporary repairs to the wall to prevent further material from being washed out to sea after it was destroyed in the winter storms of 2019/20.

Designs and funding for a permanent solution were then approved in time for work to begin in September 2020. Large steel rock anchors have been set into the bedrock with steel reinforced concrete poured in to form a dense concrete block. These blocks are secured to each other, to the bedrock and into the ground behind the new wall using steel to ensure a strong finish.

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

5. Community Employment Hubs offer services remotely

SWT's Community Employment Hubs are now providing remote support to help job seekers in lockdown. Although an SWT initiative, the Community Employment Hubs are community-led and provide support to people both in and out of work, including long-term job seekers, employees at risk of redundancy or those seeking new skills or a career change.

Prior to the latest lockdown, the service operated from several community venues across West Somerset. Once the restrictions are lifted however, the hub venues will reopen, along with four new hubs based in Taunton and Wellington, as well as a new youth hub at the Minehead EYE.

In the meantime however, the Council understands the need to maintain this vital service given the impact on people's jobs and wellbeing, and is now offering support by telephone, email and virtually via the Community Employment Hubs [Facebook page](#).

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

6. REMINDER - Help for businesses seeking government grants

The Council has already contacted the businesses that have previously applied for a support grant, 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-19-business-support-grants/>

Should you have any questions before submitting your Register of Interest form, please email lrsqo@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

If you would like to be kept informed of regular COVID-19 business support grants please sign up for the SWT [business newsletter](#).

7. REMINDER - Notice of De-Declaration of Part of Local Nature Reserve. Part of the Children's Wood/Riverside Local Nature Reserve. Section 19 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Notice is hereby given that Somerset West and Taunton Council no longer intends to manage a parcel of land, the approximate area of which is 0.059 ha of local nature reserve.

[View a plan that identifies the location of the section of Open Space land](#), shown edged red on the plan.

Objections to the proposed De-Declaration must be made in writing to Sally Stark, Assets Manager (Interim), Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE or via email s.stark@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk by no later than **19 February 2021** quoting the reference: Riverside/Hankridge LNR.

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

8. Somerset West Lottery New Year Bolt-on Prize

There is still time to purchase your Somerset West Lottery tickets to be in with a chance to win £100 Etsy gift vouchers, courtesy of the external lottery management company Gatherwell.

All tickets bought before **27 February 2021** will automatically be entered in to the bonus prize draw as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

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

9. Deadline for Community Chest Funding

There is still time to apply for funding from the Community Chest which is due to close at the end of March 2021. Applications to the fund must be submitted by **Monday 15 March 2021** to ensure assessment and awarding of grants by the deadline date of 31 March 2021.

Due to the current lock-down restrictions applicants will be able to spend their grant funding after the 31 March providing their projects are delivered in a COVID-19 safe way, e.g. moving to online delivery, or working in outside areas whilst complying with government national restrictions.

To find out more information and make an application please [click here](#).

10. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Electric truck trials as waste exports cut

Nearly all Somerset recycling stays in the UK, latest Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) figures show. Some 98% of the 103,000 tonnes collected kerbside or at recycling sites in the past eight months stayed in the UK, compared to just under 90% in all of last year. Plastic performance is even better, with less than 1% of the 3,135 tonnes collected in eight months going overseas.

The impressive figures are thanks to residents sorting their recycling and hard work by SWP's new collections contractor, SUEZ, to find more domestic re-processors. Please [click here](#) to read the full press release.

Your weekly recycling collections – What is collected?

SWP is making it easier for everyone to recycle even more and help protect our environment. To help your recycling crews, please sort and roughly segregate materials in the recycling boxes without using carrier bags. Use one box, if that is all you need. If you put things into the right containers, SWP can make sure the items get recycled.

For full details of what is collected and some top tips, [click here](#). Please find attached a document outlining the items SWP collect as part of their recycling scheme.

If you need extra recycling containers, you can order them via [My Waste Services](#).

Sorry; late or missed recycling in parts of the district

Coronavirus-related staff shortages are likely to lead to late or missed recycling collections in some areas of the district. Do not take containers in too early. If any collections are missed, SWP regret that crews cannot immediately return; please re-present recycling from 6am on your next collection date.

Please observe all usual Coronavirus safety advice for kerbside collections, including washing/sanitising hands before and after handling waste containers, disinfecting handles, and maintaining social distance from waste staff.

For an explanation of Coronavirus safety measures and this month's change to 6am starts, see: [facebook.com/SomersetWaste/posts/3741870462515672](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/posts/3741870462515672)
SWP would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused to you.

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

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) Highway Maintenance Report

We have just experienced the coldest week in ten years for the Highway Service in Somerset. There have been multiple salt runs on the SCC Precautionary Salting Network to deal with the challenging conditions. We have been fortunate that we have not had too much snow, with the disruption that this brings. However, the very cold overnight temperatures and the fact that they have struggled to get above zero degrees centigrade during the day, has resulted in heavy icing-up problems, especially on the minor road network. Needless to say, treatment of the SCC Precautionary Network has used up a considerable amount of salt and the barns at the highway depots are being topped up to cover this.

On the emergency front, with the cold but dry conditions, the two roads across Curry Moor, on the Somerset Levels and Moors that were closed due to flooding (Cuts Road between East Lyng and Athelney and New Road/Moor Lane between West Lyng and North Curry) have now been re-opened following the receding of flood levels.

Somerset County Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents and road users of Somerset West and Taunton for their patience and support whilst the now completed emergency repairs to the collapsed verge and embankment at A358 Minehead Road, Combe Florey.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit the website 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.](#)

New town centre schemes are unveiled

New schemes to support walking and cycling in three Somerset towns have been unveiled following the recent confirmation of approximately £450k of Government funding. Projects in Frome, Yeovil and Bridgwater have each been allocated Active Travel funding, along with an ongoing scheme in Taunton's East Street, which will be overseen by Somerset's Active Travel Group, representing the five local councils, police and health.

The proposed scheme in Taunton which will receive a contribution from the funding towards their overall cost is:

Taunton: Continuation of the East Street pedestrianisation. A more permanent scheme is proposed, subject to further consultation, which will see an automated barrier in place whilst further modelling of traffic impacts and access is considered. Access for blue badge holders at limited times will continue as the scheme is monitored and assessed regularly.

Please [click here](#) to read further proposed schemes for Frome, Yeovil and Bridgwater.

A community engagement and consultation process has started and will run through February with communities and businesses. You can read about this in more detail and find out how to comment on the [Somerset County Council website](#).

REMINDER - Somerset Skills and Learning (SSL) Free Online Workshops - 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](#).

Spark Somerset Covid Community Champions

Spark Somerset are inviting local people to join their growing network of Covid Community Champions. Covid Community Champions have the opportunity to learn about the Coronavirus and other health and wellbeing support, and then share the information with their friends, neighbours, colleagues and the wider community. It's a great way to help people stay safe, well and informed during the pandemic, and you'll get to meet new and interesting people too!

The next online training session is taking place on **Tuesday 2 March at 7pm** via Zoom.

Online Networking Forum for VCSE Groups Thursday 4 March, 10am – 11.30am

Spark Somerset is running an online networking event for VCSE groups in Somerset West and Taunton. It's free and VCSE staff and volunteers from across the area are welcome to come along to catch up on what's happening locally, network with other groups, and find out about the support on offer.

The events will be hosted by Jenny Hannis, Voluntary Sector Adviser, along with Gill Harrison, Community Development Worker. Click here to [register your attendance](#).

The Wessex Community Hub

Funding opportunity for Community Led Housing Schemes

The Wessex Community Hub is an advisory organisation which supports community groups who are interested in community led housing in Somerset and Dorset. The Community Housing Adviser for the Hub can support groups to understand what options there are for groups considering a community led housing scheme and signpost them to technical advisors and others who can offer professional advice and support and also deliver bespoke training.

The Hub also supports groups with small grants which can be used to pay for professional support to progress a scheme. The Hub is currently looking for groups at the start up stage of a project who require either support or funding.

There is some funding available that needs to be allocated before the end of March.

If Councillors are aware of any community led groups that might benefit from some funding to kick start or progress a community led housing scheme please contact Sue Southwell (Development Enabling Specialist) s.southwell@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk for more details.

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Winter Safety

Just when we hoped that spring might be in the air, the temperatures have dropped again. You may be ramping up the heating or using extra heaters to stay cosy. Please place heaters in a safe place away from furniture and curtains, and don't be tempted to use them to try to dry clothes.

More tips for staying safe when you're staying at home can be found [here](#).

REMINDER - 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.

Idverde

National Nest Box Week 14 – 21 February 2021

Since 1997, Nest Box Week was set up and developed by the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology). It always runs for a week from 14 February and is timed to take place when 'love is in the air' and smaller birds are pairing up ahead of the breeding season! Advice and information about how to attract more birds into your garden can be found [here](#).

Idverde in Minehead supports this initiative by donating nesting bird boxes to community groups and organisations who can erect them in a public space for the enjoyment of everyone. If you would like to find out more about this offer please contact the Idverde Contract Manager in the first instance at Julie.Lynch@idverde.co.uk, (Minehead) and/or Richard.Hopkins@idverde.co.uk (Taunton)

Somerset Wildlife Trust

Learn to identify common bird songs

With spring just around the corner, why not get a head start on learning to identify common bird songs you can hear in the UK? Listen for the trills and patterns in their song to help identify birds when you hear them out your windows or on your walks.

Check out this [video](#) from [Wildlife Watch](#).

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Stay well back from unstable cliff edges

Please stay well away from cliff edges and the bottom of cliffs - a spate of recent rainy weather has resulted in unstable areas near the coast and sea.

Please [click here](#) to watch a short video uploaded by HM Coastguard outlining the dangers of unstable cliffs.

If you're lucky enough to live near the coast and be in a position to take your exercise there in line with local COVID-19 restrictions, please do be careful near cliffs. Stay well back, wear appropriate sturdy footwear and ensure that you check tide times and weather before setting out.

If you or someone else is in difficulty call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Food support for families during lockdown

Somerset County Council (SCC) has provided additional funding to help schools provide families with food support during this lockdown. During term time, schools are providing meal options for all pupils 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 some children who are not eligible for Free School Meals might still benefit from receiving food support, so their additional funding can be used by schools to support a wider range of children.

During the February half-term holiday schools will provide vouchers or food boxes for all children who are entitled to Free School meals using funding from the Winter Food Grant.

Work has already started on providing some fun holiday activities with food included to support families during the Easter holidays. More details will be released when known.

If you know a family that would benefit from support around food then please link them with their [local village agent](#) or to call the Coronavirus Helpline on **0300 790 6275**. Information is also available on the [SCC website](#).

REMINDER - 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.

REMINDER - Community Transport Schemes

Somerset County Council (SCC) is joining forces with transport providers to help vulnerable residents get to their COVID-19 vaccination appointments. While many older and more vulnerable people will be able to attend a location close to their home, some will be relying on public transport. SCC is working with Community Transport and Slinky Demand Responsive services across Somerset to allow free travel for bus pass holders when attending vaccination appointments.

Community Transport schemes can offer transport for individuals and groups, with some offering door-to-door services. Community Transport services are provided by a number of independent, non-profit making groups and organisations, all with the purpose of helping community members access essential services.

SCC is working with bus operators and [community transport providers](#) to make it as easy as possible for those people to get to appointments by:

- Suspending current concessionary bus pass rules so these can be used on all public services before 9.30am. This was effective from 1 February
- Working with Community Transport and Slinky Demand Responsive services across Somerset to allow free travel for bus pass holders when attending vaccination appointments. [Follow link](#) to see options.

If you are still experiencing a problem getting to your appointment call the Coronavirus Helpline on **0300 790 6275**. Lines are open seven days a week, 8am - 6pm.

Exmoor National Park

Partnership Fund: Small Grants, up to £2,500

The deadline for the next round is **22 February 2021** after which all applications that have been received and are eligible will be considered. Subject to funds being available future rounds will be announced after this.

The Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) has made funding available to support projects that help to achieve National Park purposes, and the fulfilment of Partnership Plan ambitions that make a difference for People, Place and Prosperity on Exmoor.

The scheme is open to external applications from community groups, businesses, charities, individuals and other organisations. Grants up to £2,500 are available for use over a maximum of two years.

Please note during the financial year 2020/21 the fund will be prioritising applications which meet the stated criteria and can help with Exmoor's recovery in the wake of the impact of COVID-19.

[Click here for application details.](#)

National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)

Virtual Conference 24 March 2021 9.30am - 4pm

On 24 March TNLCF will be holding their first full day virtual conference. The speakers are being confirmed. The 'Communities Can' conference will be a one-day, free online conference for the organisations that are funded and partnered with TNLCF.

TNLCF want to provide an opportunity for people to get together to reflect on the amazing work carried out over the past 12 months to support communities to thrive in the most challenging circumstances, then begin a conversation about how to rebuild following the pandemic.

TNLCF have two keynote speakers (who will be confirmed over the next few weeks) alongside five panels, which will include:

- How TNLCF can support civil society to rebuild and renew as we emerge into a new future together
- How TNLCF can help disproportionately impacted people, such as BAME communities
- How young people are supported
- How the climate emergency can be tackled and help to rebuild our planet
- The role of funders in rebuilding communities

Get more information and register by clicking [here](#).

Please share this virtual conference details with your networks as a save the date.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

A Service for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Adults in Somerset

Community Council for Somerset's New Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) service is LIVE! This week CCS is reaching out to anyone on the CEV list in Somerset. They know that COVID-19 has been exceptionally hard for those who are shielded from society. So, if you are on the CEV list CCS want to keep you connected to your community.

Do you want to meet new people in a similar position to you as a CEV person, with shared interests? CCS know it's good to talk and share experiences. They can connect you with another person who is on the CEV list to keep your spirits up – you are not alone.

Stay connected to stay well. You can sign up online by visiting www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk/c2c or call **01823 331222**.

This service is funded by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) and is delivered by Smart Communities (part of the CCS group) & CCS Village & Community Agents.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Hinkley Point C Community Fund

Fortitude Wellbeing is one of the latest groups to receive a grant from the Hinkley Point C Community Fund. With their work on improving mental health and wellbeing having even greater significance during the latest lockdown, the group, which is based in Taunton, is focused on providing opportunities based in the natural world to help people rediscover a sense of purpose and enjoyment in their lives.

Using a grant of almost £5,000 from the Fund, the organisation has been able to deliver a new project based around the beneficial impact of woodworking on mental health. The latest initiative will bring young people and their families closer together, helping them to connect and develop coping strategies through woodworking and craft workshops.

The HPC Community Fund is part of a wider £20 million commitment of funding, provided by EDF through Section 106 agreements, for communities that are affected by the development of the new nuclear power station, to promote their social, economic and environmental wellbeing and enhance their quality of life. If you run a local community project in Somerset and would like to find out more about grant funding from the HPC Community Fund please call Somerset Community Foundation on **01749 344949** or visit: www.hpcfunds.co.uk

The full press release can be viewed [here](#).

Somerset Prepared Funding Support

As well as [preparedness](#) advice, the [Somerset Prepared Partnership](#) provides funding to local communities developing emergency arrangements. Groups can apply to Somerset Prepared for up to £5,000 for training, equipment or other costs that would help your community be better prepared for emergencies. Applying is simple, and they are happy to work with you to find the solutions that are right for your community. See the [Funding Support](#) page for terms and conditions and how to apply.

Grants previously issued have helped to:

- Provide training to local groups;
- Issue equipment such as storage huts and protective clothing; and
- Recruit volunteers to support emergency plans.

This list is not exhaustive and Somerset Prepared are happy to work with communities to find the right local solutions – so if you have a creative idea to put into action please let them know!

EMINDER - 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.

Minehead Literary Festival Competition 2021

As reading and writing remain COVID-safe activities, the Minehead Literacy Festival team are inviting entries for the 2021 Minehead Literacy Festival Short Story Writing Competition which is open to all ages from 5 to 100+. More details about the Festival can be found [here](#).

This year's theme is HOPE, to be interpreted as widely as your creative muses allow. Please [click here](#) to read more and access the rules and entry forms, for children and adults.

It would be helpful if you could use your communication networks to encourage children to participate, especially those who are home-schooled and might not receive the information via a school. More information about Minehead Literacy Festivals can be found on their [website](#). Two leaflets have been attached for your ease of reference.

Health and Welfare

Community pharmacy site to offer COVID-19 vaccinations

Boots pharmacy in Taunton will start to offer the COVID-19 vaccination to those in the highest priority groups from this week. The pharmacy-led site will deliver a wide range of pre-booked vaccination appointments throughout the week. People in the highest priority groups as identified by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation will be sent a letter by the NHS and invited to book their vaccination through the national booking service by phone, or online.

Wellbeing Champion urges students to have their say

Hannah Vile, the new Young Person's Health and Wellbeing Champion for Somerset, is urging young people from across Somerset to have their say. Hannah, who is excited to be promoting the voice of local students, is heading up a new project aimed at improving outcomes for young people.

Hannah is creating a student voice task group who will meet regularly over the next 8 months to explore young people's experiences, thoughts and ideas. She will also work with schools to investigate the impact of the Health and Wellbeing Framework.

In September she will report her findings and make recommendations to Public Health and schools to maximise outcomes for young people. For further information and details on how to get involved, please [click here](#).

REMINDER - Please don't drop your guard once vaccinated

While there are many things that we are still discovering about COVID-19, one thing that we know for certain is that it can be destroyed with simple soap and hot water. That's the reason that the 'hands' part of the 'Hands, Face, Space' message is such an important part of our 'toolkit' for tackling the virus and preventing its spread. The golden rules are: wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water; wear a face covering when required and keeping a social distance of at least two metres.

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

REMINDER - 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.

REMINDER - Urgent plea for vulnerable groups to have flu vaccine

Somerset County Council is urging people with underlying health conditions to take up the free offer of a flu vaccination if they haven't already. A list of all people that are eligible for the free flu vaccination can be found at: <https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/flu/>

To make an appointment to receive the free flu jab you can contact your local pharmacy. Strict social distancing and hygiene practices are in place to protect both the public and staff at vaccination clinics and Government restrictions do allow you to leave your home to attend as it is a medical appointment.

REMINDER- Public Health England (PHE) Health and Wellbeing Advisory Network

As COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities and the country remains under national lockdown, we need to do all we can to communicate important COVID-19 messages to our communities across the county. PHE really need to get key information out to as many residents as possible and it will require a collective effort.

If you haven't signed up to be part of the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Network yet, please do. The Network will help PHE to understand the COVID-19 related communication and engagement needs of communities across Somerset, especially the more vulnerable groups. The Network will provide a platform for a two way dialogue that can be fed back to the COVID-19 Engagement Board to help shape the response to the pandemic. The idea is to make communicating and engaging with groups and settings more targeted, simpler and with a joined up approach.

By joining, you can expect to receive regular up to date information on COVID-19 and health impacts across Somerset, opportunities to feedback to PHE via surveys as well as exclusive access to webinars and communications materials to address

specific issues and barriers locally. PHE currently have a live survey and they would really appreciate you taking the time to respond; it should only take a few minutes of your time.

To sign up simply [click here](#) and enter your name and email address and someone will be in touch soon.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

In Somerset, the Councils have responded to over 12,200 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 including vaccinations
- 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 visit www.corona-helpers.co.uk

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. What support is available for me and my child during lockdown?

A. Life under lockdown can be especially tough if your living situation poses further challenges. YoungMinds is an independent national charity and is not part of the NHS at all. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is a set of local services run by the NHS in your area and you'll usually be referred by your GP or, you can [find your nearest CAMHS service on the NHS website](#).

- You can speak to YoungMinds experts at the Parents Helpline by phoning **0808 802 5544** (9.30am - 4pm, Mon - Fri). Calls are free.
- You can also Email using the [Parents Helpline contact form](#).
- Use the live [Parents webchat service](#) (9:30am - 4pm, Mon – Fri)

Tips, advice and where to get support for your child's mental health during the Coronavirus pandemic can be found [here](#).

Q. I'm struggling to feed my family at the moment. Where can I go for help?

A. First point of contact should be phoning the Coronavirus Support Helpline on **0300 790 6275**. This single phone number is available seven days per week 8am – 6pm and is there for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support, including food parcels. For finding out more about accessing food and essential supplies, please [click here](#).

Crime / Safeguarding

Domestic Abuse

Ask for ANI – Action Needed Immediately

The Government is supporting a new scheme [Ask for ANI](#), which allows those at risk or suffering from abuse to go into pharmacies and discreetly signal that they need support. By asking for ANI, which stands for Action Needed Immediately, a trained pharmacy worker will offer a private space where they can gain a better understanding, if the victim needs to speak to the police or access a support service such as a national or local domestic abuse helpline.

As an essential retailer based on high streets across the country, and with specifically trained staff, pharmacies can provide a safe space for victims to sound an alarm if they are isolated at home with their abuser and unable to get help in another way.

The codeword scheme will be promoted using discreet social media adverts and paid search. Pharmacies will be given promotional material to display in store to signal to victims that they are participating. Health professionals, social workers and Job Centres will also be asked to promote the scheme, alongside police, local authorities and specialist support services for victims. To read more on this initiative please [click here](#).

Action Fraud

Don't fall for romance fraud this Valentine's Day

PCC Sue Mountstevens and Avon and Somerset Police are encouraging local people to know the signs of romance fraud to stay safe online. Fraudsters are capitalising on people's loneliness and increasing use of social media and dating apps as a result of the pandemic. According to [Action Fraud](#), in 2020 there were 218 reports of romance fraud in Avon and Somerset compared to 151 in 2019, an increase of 44%. It is believed the true figure of people being tricked into giving over money to fraudsters is likely to be much higher.

Romance fraud is when offenders feign romantic feelings for someone online in order to gain their affection and then use that goodwill to commit fraud. Fraudsters effectively groom their victim using various psychological techniques to build trust while, in reality, the offender is not who they say they are and will be talking to a number of other people in the same way.

Once fraudsters have created a trust between themselves and the victim, they gradually start to introduce money into the conversation and begin to make requests. Such requests usually start off small and might be for things such as phone credit. These requests will escalate and fraudsters will start asking for money for things such as flight tickets, to help a sick relative or to assist with complications at customs.

Most victims do not realise they have been scammed and some do not want to believe that the person they have invested so much time in could have been using them.

Please [click here](#) for further information on how you can protect yourself from romance fraud.

GUN CRIME- National Crime Agency (NCA)

You only get one shot in life – don't blow it!

The National Crime Agency is warning young people: "You only get one shot in life – don't blow it." The Agency – which leads the UK's fight against serious organised crime – is urging people to know the gun, know the law and know the consequences of illegal possession of firearms in the UK in a new campaign.

Although firearms crime in the UK remains low compared with other countries, there has been an upward trend in recorded offences since 2014. In the last two years the NCA alone seized 552 firearms in operational activity supported by police. Now, in a bid to raise awareness among people interested in firearms or on the fringes of crime gangs, the Agency has launched its latest campaign with targeted online adverts on channels including Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. More information and a partner social media toolkit can be found on the [illegal firearms page](#).

The work is designed to encourage vulnerable young people to stay away from illegal firearms and understand that possessing one could ruin their lives.

A small proportion of lawfully-held firearms, such as shotguns, are stolen for criminal use. Theft of shotguns declined in 2020, almost certainly due to COVID-19 restrictions on movement. Shotguns are typically stolen from license holders in rural areas and used by criminals in urban areas. While such thefts may be targeted, most are the result of opportunistic burglary.

If you have any information about illegal firearms or any concerns about people's access to firearms, please report it to police or anonymously to Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

To read more about the work of the National Crime Agency please click [here](#)

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Helping parents to keep their children safe online

Safer Internet Day was Tuesday 9 February and Avon and Somerset Police renewed their efforts to support parents and carers to help their children to stay safe online.

Co-ordinated in the UK by [The Safer Internet Centre](#), the theme for this year's Safer Internet Day is 'An internet we trust – exploring reliability in the online world.'

In Avon and Somerset, experts in online child safety are offering practical advice and tips which allow parents to talk to their children confidently about how to be savvy, questioning and critical users of the internet.

During the pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of reports of children falling victim to predators who target them online, through popular apps, games and social media platforms such as SnapChat, Instagram and Roblox. As a direct response to this, teams of experts have been holding a series of webinars for parents and professionals who work with young people offering advice and information about how to keep children safe online.

Webinars for parents have been hugely popular and oversubscribed every time A&SP have run them so they are delighted to offer a recorded session on YouTube for people to look at in their own time.

The three videos for parents cover topics including:

- Exploitation of children online (*ready to view*)
- Technical protective and safety measures available (*to be uploaded soon*)

- Tips on starting a conversation with children about the internet and how to use it safely (*to be uploaded soon*)

Signs that a child or young person may be being groomed or exploited online:

- Talking about older or new friends they have met online
- Talking about gifts or money they've received online
- Becoming withdrawn or secretive
- Receiving large numbers of calls or messages
- Anxiety about being away from their phone

Tips on how to help children stay safe online

- Children should have access online to age appropriate apps / content and appropriate parental controls and supervision should be applied
- **Zip it** – Keep your personal stuff private and think about what you say and do online
- **Block it** – Block people who send nasty messages and don't open unknown links and attachments
- **Flag it** – Flag up with someone you trust if anything upsets you, makes you feel uncomfortable or if someone asks to meet you offline
- More information and support can be found [here](#).

Please [click here](#) to read the full A&SP campaign article.

A&SP say Keep Leisure Local

This week police officers assisted the fire service in rescuing two people who were stranded at the top of a cliff at Cheddar Gorge. A third person who had travelled with them, but who did not complete the climb was thankfully able to call for assistance. All three individuals had travelled more than 30 miles from South Gloucestershire, and were reported for breaching COVID-19 regulations.

Somerset Area Commander Mike Prior said: "Climbing the Gorge in near darkness is extremely unwise under any circumstances. However, it's also particularly concerning that the individuals chose to make this unnecessary journey in clear breach of COVID-19 regulations, which are in place to help protect the NHS and save lives. This reckless decision resulted in a complicated and lengthy rescue, requiring the temporary closure of the B3135 Cliff road, and attendance from multiple emergency services, including four police officers and 20 fire service staff."

Once again, A&SP are urging people stay at home and avoid all unnecessary travel. They will not hesitate to issue fines to those deliberately breaching the regulations with no regard for the safety of others.

#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".

[#COVID-19](#) [#stayhomesavelives](#) [#yourcommunity](#)

Finally

The below link may be useful to you, should there be a requirement to convert files to jpg format: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/online/pdf-to-jpg.html>

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

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

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

#StayAtHome **#ProtectTheNHS** **#SaveLives**

Attachments:

SWP Recycling what do we collect SWP doc

POSTER MLF childrens competiton 2021 final

POSTER MLF adult comp Final