

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 57 Week ending 09/05/2021

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air

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. COVID-19 Business Support Grants Update

To date, SWT has been able to issue [Restart Grants](#) totalling £9.1m to eligible businesses within the District. The Government requires the Council to undertake certain checks through 3rd Party companies in order to identify any potential fraud or irregularities before making payment. Staff are undertaking manual reviews on a large number of cases prior to approving payments hence the delay in some businesses receiving their grant.

SWT fully appreciate how important these grants are to businesses and are working to provide this much needed support. SWT will always notify the business once a grant has been approved for payment or if it has been declined, together with the reasons.

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

2. District Councils give local electors a vote on the future of local government in Somerset

A local poll of all electors on two proposals for the future of local government in Somerset currently under consideration – One Somerset and Stronger Somerset – will now go ahead later this month.

The poll, which will be independently run and verified by Civica Electoral Services, will take place from **18 May to 4 June**. Every elector will be issued with a ballot paper and invited to vote by post or online. The local poll was agreed by each of the four Somerset District Councils at meetings on Friday 30 April. The report considered at the meetings said holding a poll would “give residents a voice in the debate and help the Secretary of State in understanding and determining the level of support amongst residents for each of the options.”

The District Councils approached Somerset County Council to take part in the poll. Somerset County Council has informed the District Council Leaders that it will not be participating in or endorsing the poll.

The District Council Leaders have written to the Secretary of State to inform him of the poll and its dates and ask that the result of the poll be properly considered as part of the decision-making process on the future of local government in Somerset.

3. Election Result

The by-election for the Trull, Pitminster & Corfe Ward took place yesterday.

Dawn Johnson was elected with the result as follows:

BOOKER Samuel James (Labour) 44
JOHNSON Dawn Elaine (Liberal Democrat) 781 - elected
THORNE John Bryan (Conservative) 583

4. Virtual Meetings Update

Further to the update last week on the High Court judgement on virtual meetings, further information has been issued by the High Court on what this means in terms of the meeting being ‘open to the public’ or ‘held in public’.

The following information is taken from the Lawyers in Local Government website:

Member Update: - Virtual Meeting Judgement following Post-script on Open to Public

Publish date: 04/05/2021

Following the Judgement from the High Court in relation to our Virtual Meeting Judicial Review, the court indicated at the end of that judgement within a postscript, that it would consider references to a meeting being “open to the public” or “held in public”. That judgement was handed down today.

The Court has ruled that local authority meetings must be open to the public in a physical sense. References to a meeting being "open to the public" or "held in public" in the Court's view mean the physical attendance by the public. This means that the public can attend in person and councils have to provide such facilities. This should however be provided and managed in line with current restrictions and public health advice. So, in practical terms, Councils have no choice but to control the numbers of people physically in the meeting room at any one time to comply with the Government's Covid restrictions in place.

Councils can still provide live streaming/broadcasts to allow wider public access. There is a difference in our view between the public accessing the meeting on the live stream or broadcast as observers and those actively participating in the meeting as (as) objectors, applicants, or appellants. Based on the above additional judgement, the latter's attendance must be in person but in the broader sense, the meeting must still be open to the public, even those not participating, albeit in compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions in place for the time being.

We realise that this places additional pressure on local authorities in their arrangements for meetings moving forward. We would urge all local authorities and indeed individuals to now turn their attention to the Local Authority Remote Meetings: Call for Evidence and respond to the government by 17 June 2021.

As ever, it is for your authority to take its own view both on the interpretation of the judgement and the steps it will be taking in respect of the conduct of meetings moving forward. Please do take advantage of our private member forum areas on our respective websites to discuss arrangements with your colleagues and share best practice.

To read the judgement [click here](#)

5. 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:

- Wednesday 19 May – **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 14 May)
- Thursday 20 May – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 17 May)
- Wednesday 26 May – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 21 May)

From 7 May 2021, meetings can no longer be held virtually.

These meetings will take place in the Chamber at Deane House following the Government COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Due to the need to socially distance and not having a lot of capacity in the Chamber, we will only be allowing those people who have registered to speak to attend the meeting (subject to them completing a COVID-19 checklist). If they do not wish to attend, a member of the Governance Team will read out their questions/statement.

The meetings will still 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.

Contact the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk. Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

6. Somerset Business Recovery Survey 2021

Somerset's five Local Authorities (County and Districts) are jointly undertaking this vital survey to help us better understand and respond to local business needs, with a particular focus on the impacts that COVID-19 will have had on many businesses over the last 12 months.

By completing this survey, businesses will be providing much needed intelligence to help shape the approach to economic recovery in Somerset, including the support that businesses will be able to receive.

Please encourage as many businesses as possible to complete the survey, via the following link: [Somerset Business Recovery Survey 2021](#).

If you have questions about the survey or wish to provide additional feedback, please email: somerseteconomicdevelopment@somerset.gov.uk

7. 97 per cent of households respond to Census 2021

The response to Census 2021 has exceeded all expectations, with 97 per cent of households across England and Wales making sure they count when it comes to local services like school places, GP surgeries and hospital beds. This is above the pre-census target of 94 per cent, while all local authorities have seen over 90 per cent of households respond, exceeding an 80 per cent target.

For those who haven't yet completed the simple online form, time is running out. The online questionnaire will close on **17 May**.

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

8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Garden Waste Collections

Due to COVID-19, your garden waste subscription for 2020-21 will now need to be renewed with effect from **9 May 2021**. Renewal notices will have been distributed from the end of March and throughout April.

Subscriptions for garden waste collections 2021-22 will run from **10 May 2021**. SWT will no longer send a subscription sticker. Subscription details will be held electronically and loaded onto collection crews in-cab devices. It is therefore important that the subscription address details are correct. Once payment is received, the subscription will be active from the next working day. Collections will only be made from 2021-22 subscribers using bins with lids closed or in paid-for garden waste bags.

From 10 May 2021, the garden waste collection days may change. Full details will be sent separately if you are affected. Alternatively, after 1 May you can check your [collection day](#) online at Somerset Waste Partnership's website.

For more information on kerbside services, recycling sites, and on COVID-19 and waste, visit: somersetwaste.gov.uk, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter or follow @somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) SCC Highway Maintenance Update

The cold spring finally ended and we are now into much milder conditions. Unfortunately, this means wet and windy, and this presents a different set of challenges for SCC Highways. Of course, with the turn of the seasons, things are now starting to grow and in order to keep the road network safe throughout the summer, SCC Highways will be commencing their rural highway verge cutting programme on **Monday 10 May**. They will start on the “A” and “B” Class network, with the cutting of central reservations of dual carriageways being the first task.

SCC Highway's “Environmental Maintenance, Verge Maintenance Sheet 2021” has been attached to this newsletter and this document contains more information about grass cutting, hedge trimming, weed killing and environmental conservation.

The Somerset Rivers Authority/ SCC Highways joint venture to reduce the risk and impacts of flooding in Kingston St Mary by improving the drainage on Lodes Lane has now been completed.

In **Minehead** the installation of the new puffin crossing on the **A39 Bircham Road**, outside **West Somerset College**, continues. Temporary traffic signals will control traffic during this operation. Also continuing, but this time within a temporary road

closure, are the kerb/channel work and carriageway resurfacing at the upper end of **Irnham Road** between **Irnham Mews** and **Friday Street**.

Carriageway patching continues under the cover of a temporary road closure on the **Staple Fitzpaine Road**, between **Orchard Portman** and **Castle Neroche**.

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

Reminder- A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton

Important works started in Taunton this month around the **A38 Mary Street, Billetfield and Paul Street junctions**, to support a residential development. The developer has helped Somerset County Council draft a set of Q&As which hopefully explains what is happening, why and how this might affect pedestrians and road-users.

Reminder- Temporary Road Closure: Yallands Hill, Cheddon Fitzpaine

The order becomes effective on 29 April 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **5 May 2021** and last for 11 weeks (24hrs) to enable CJL Construction Ltd to carry out all construction and associated works in connection with the Western Relief Road.

For any further information about this closure please contact CJL Construction Ltd on **(01934) 853227**, quoting reference: ttro431060TD - S50 - Yallands Hill, Cheddon FP.

Please note that should you require to view a closure which is more than two weeks ahead you will need to register for free with www.One.Network.

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.](#)

BREXIT

EU Settlement Scheme

EU citizens protect your rights by applying to the EU Settlement Scheme

If you are an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, you and your family can protect your rights by applying to the EU Settlement Scheme to stay in the UK. You do not need to apply if you are a British or Irish citizen, or you have indefinite leave to remain or enter. **The deadline to apply is 30 June 2021.**

The [EU Settlement Scheme](#) allows you and your family to get the immigration status you need to:

- continue to live, work and study in the UK
- access public services like the NHS

You need to complete a short online application form using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. The application will ask you to:

- prove your identity
- prove that you live in the UK
- declare any criminal convictions

Successful applicants will receive settled status or pre-settled status, depending on how long you have lived in the UK. You will get digital proof of your status through an online service. Please [click here](#) to apply and find out more information. A guide on EU Settlement Scheme Important Information can be found [here](#).

EU Settlement Scheme Deadline – have all your staff and service users applied?

Most EU citizens living in the UK (as well as those from the EEA and Switzerland) need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to gain Settled Status so they can continue to live and work in the UK after **30 June 2021**. The pandemic is having an impact on application times to the EU Settlement Scheme, so it's vital that people apply as soon as possible.

You can apply for settled status at <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

You should consider the impact on your organisation if staff do not have Settled Status, as they will not be able to work after **June 2021**. You can also play an important role by sign posting your service users to the scheme, as some people and children in our community may not be aware of the need to apply or may need help.

Local charity **Diversity Voice**, in partnership with SCC are working with the Home Office to provide help from regulated advisors for those who need it, including vulnerable people and employers. They can provide posters, hand-outs for service users and 1:1 help for applicants in any language. **There's no charge for this service.** Contact euss@diversityvoice.org.uk, **0300 075 0105**.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) HPC Community Fund supports local cultural diversity

[Diversity Voice](#), based in Bridgwater, champions intercultural integration through initiatives and events, providing support and services that help the inclusion of migrants and incoming workers, in and around Somerset.

In 2018 the group were awarded a grant of £180,000 over three years from the HPC Community Fund, to work with those directly connected with Hinkley Point C (HPC) and the wider community in Sedgemoor and West Somerset. The key aim was to help provide legal and welfare advice, and deliver events and training to bolster intercultural integration and English language support, for migrant workers and their families.

Over and above its work with Hinkley Point C, Diversity Voice is providing support for communities across the region; according to the latest Home Office data, applications made by EU applicants (all EEA, but excluding those from other non-UK born origins) for status to remain in the UK beyond June 2021 are at 7140 in Sedgemoor and 6780 in Somerset West and Taunton, showing a clear need for the important work that organisations such as Diversity Voice deliver.

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

Clubs In Crisis Fund

Apply for money to help your club or community group reopen and provide 'sport for development' activities to young people.

This is a quick way to apply for up to £2,021.

You can apply for money if you work or volunteer for a sports club or community group that:

- is based in Somerset, North Somerset, BANES, City of Bristol or South Gloucestershire
- works with children and young people aged 5–25
- uses sport to develop life skills, improve mental health, reduce crime, develop employability skills, or build stronger communities
- has an annual turnover of up to £75,000
- has been adversely affected by coronavirus

Ask for money by **5pm on 19 May 2021**.

Please [click here](#) for full details.

REMINDER- SCC Community Renewal Fund

Applications are now being invited for the Community Renewal Fund – Somerset. This is a new funding opportunity, launched by the Government in the Budget in March. The funding runs for one year and is intended to pave the way to the Shared Prosperity Fund due to be launched in 2022.

Applications are invited from partners (including, but not limited to, businesses, voluntary and community groups, education and training providers, and district councils) for bids which must be submitted to government by 18 June 2021.

Project proposals must be submitted to Somerset County Council by **10am on 10 May 2021**. Please [click here](#) for further information about the SCC Community Renewal Fund – Somerset.

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

REMINDER- Active Halls Funding

SASP have received funding from Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to encourage physical activity providers for mid / older aged people to reopen in village and community halls.

SASP will offer grants (of up to £500) to support the reduced income providers make through COVID-19 restrictions such as reduced class numbers due to social distancing and/or confidence issues of their participants. Priority will be given to classes in areas within the top 30% Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in Somerset. You can check your village and community hall postcode [here](#).

Who can apply?

SASP are seeking applications from instructors who are looking to resume or launch new activity within village halls across Somerset. They hope this funding will support groups or instructors to restart activity post COVID-19 which may not otherwise be viable. Please [click here](#) for full details and to make an application.

You can submit your application at any time, subject to funds still being available. No applications will be considered if submitted after 5pm on **Monday 31 May 2021**. If you have any questions about the fund please contact [SASP](#).

Exmoor National Park (ENP) COVID-19 Exmoor Latest Update

National Parks have played an even more important part in many people's lives during the pandemic. ENP know how vital connecting with the outdoors is for health and wellbeing and thank you for your support as they continue to balance the needs of all those who live in, work in and visit the National Park.

The Government have provided [advice on accessing green spaces safely during COVID-19](#), which all National Park users must follow along with the [Countryside Code](#). This includes information for those who own or manage land.

What's open?

[Public rights of way](#) remain open for access in line with government restrictions and ENP are continuing to carry out any inspections and maintenance as necessary. They ask that you take care to follow local signs in place for your own safety, and that of staff and residents. Please also be considerate of any wildlife or livestock that may have taken the opportunity to relocate while fewer humans are around.

Car parks and public toilets run by the National Park Authority remain open. Please be aware that they do not have responsibility for all such facilities in the National Park. If you find that car parks are shut or full, please seek appropriate alternatives and don't park on verges or in entranceways. And it goes without saying that nature is neither a bathroom nor a rubbish bin.

Staying in self-contained holiday accommodation, including second homes, is now permitted meaning you can come on holiday to Exmoor if you keep to your household bubble. Some campsites have also reopened to allow people to stay in tents, caravans or motorhomes, but please be aware that restrictions are in place over access to some facilities such as toilet and shower blocks, in line with Government advice.

Shops, outdoor hospitality and attractions have reopened, meaning you can visit the [National Park Centres](#), along with cafes, beer gardens and restaurants if they

have outdoor seating. Outdoor attractions, such as the famous [Cliff Railway](#), have also started up again.

What's closed?

Indoor hospitality, entertainment and attractions are not permitted to reopen until at least **17 May 2021**.

Please [click here](#) for further information including how ENP are keeping you safe.

Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Spring 2021 Newsletter

The latest newsletter containing articles on conservation, fundraising and competitions is now available. To view the online magazine please [click here](#).

Lyme Disease UK (LDUK)

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month, which means Lyme Disease UK are launching their annual Wake Up To Lyme Campaign. This year, the campaign will be entirely online due to the pandemic and LDUK's got a brand new look! Head to wakeuptolyme.com for details.

Please arm yourself with the knowledge on how to prevent bites, remove ticks and most importantly what to do if you suspect you may have contracted Lyme disease. Whether you work outside, have a pet, spend time in the garden or enjoy the odd walk in a park we all have the potential to be bitten by ticks. The longer a tick is left to feed, the higher the chances are that it will pass on any diseases it's carrying. Incorrect removal will also increase the chances of disease transmission.

If left untreated or unfortunately if it is under treated by GPs unfamiliar with the latest guidelines, Lyme can leave you with numerous long lasting symptoms.

To reduce the risk of being bitten:

- cover your skin while walking outdoors and tuck your trousers into your socks
- use insect repellent on your clothes and skin – products containing DEET are best
- stick to paths whenever possible
- wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off

Lyme Disease UK are an excellent source of the most up to date advice on prevention and treatment so please have a good look at their website and point other people in their direction if tick bites are a concern. So whilst it is important to remove the tick as soon as possible, it is equally as important that the tick is removed correctly. Please [click here](#) to learn how to remove ticks safely.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Be Water Aware

In the past five years, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) has attended 360 water rescue incidents. There are a number of hotspots in the two counties, in particular, the Exeter Quay area, and **Taunton near Coal Orchard**.

As part of the National Fire Chief Council's water safety campaign, Be Water Aware, DSFRS is asking pub-goers to take extra care and look out for friends when drinking and walking near water. Around half of people who drown had no intention of being in water – they may have been walking, running, or jump in the water after their dog.

If someone falls into the water near you, follow this advice:

- Never go into the water to try to save someone.
- **Call 999 immediately**. If you're near the coast, ask for the coastguard. If you are inland, ask for the fire, and ambulance services.

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

HM Coastguard Watchet

The Coastguard were called out to a report of persons in difficulty off of Watchet Harbour believed to be struggling in the mud at low water. Quickly on scene the first Coastguard Rescue Officers met with the informant who dialled 999 and had the adult and two children identified to them as continuing along the low water line towards the west of the harbour.

Coastguards then intercepted them and confirmed that they were safe and well, and had not been in any difficult, purely taking caution crossing the harbour entrance. With it confirmed no persons were in distress, the launching of a Lifeboat from RNLI Lifeboat Station, Minehead for support was cancelled. The informant did the right thing, concerned for the 2 children and adult by dialling 999 and informing the Coastguard.

Remember in a coastal emergency to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Help and support for businesses affected by COVID-19

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has made available webinars and videos about the support available to businesses to help them deal with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

HMRC cover the following government schemes:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Job Retention Scheme
- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Rebate Scheme

Businesses can keep up to date with the latest information by registering for HMRC's email updates. Guidance can be found [here](#). Please [click here](#) to sign up.

Somerset Accessible Apprenticeships

A new partnership between [Somerset County Council](#), [sense](#) and [Mencap](#) is helping people with a learning disability, a learning difficulty or autism to access apprenticeships.

Mencap will support up to 20 Level 2 retail and customer service apprentices with a dedicated job coach and provide expert support to their employer. Research has shown that this support develops loyal and effective team members.

If you would like to develop new customer service team members [Please click here for more details about the programme and contact details.](#)

Education Business Partnership

Become a youth friendly employer and connect with young people in Somerset

Education Business Partnership have teamed up with Youth Employment UK to launch a new online platform to showcase Somerset as a Youth Friendly Place. This online platform supports young people to find out about the jobs, apprenticeships and training options available in their area. It will also include career ideas, job hunting tips, travel information, wellbeing support and access to youth groups.

Young people can connect to employers signed up to [Youth Employment UK's free Good Youth Employment charter](#). As well as recognising businesses as a Youth Friendly Employer, it also provides free resources and support to businesses to explore how to engage with young people to effectively meet your business needs.

[Find out more here.](#)

Schools and Colleges- Guide young people to their next step

You want to help your learners achieve the best possible life outcomes. The Education Business Partnership can help you to guide young people to their next step in education, training or employment.

The Education Business Partnership's resources will help you offer the best possible advice to your learners as they consider their futures.

- Understand how to meet your [statutory duties](#), as set out by the Government's careers strategy
- [Tools and training](#) available for career leads and teachers
- Explore the [support available for SEND learners](#)
- Key tips for [engaging with employers](#).

Check the [Vacancies](#) page for Somerset employers offering work experience, traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities for your learners.

Fly the Flag for Somerset Day 2021

Somerset Day Community Interest Company want to turn Somerset into a sea of Somerset flags and bunting, flying from public and community buildings, churches, schools, village flagpoles, gardens, windows, cars etc over the weekend of 8 and 9 May through to 11 May, Somerset Day.

Whether it's the distinctive Somerset flag with its bright red dragon waving from a flagpole, or your own painted picture in your front window, this is the time to Fly the Flag for Somerset.

Please [click here](#) to read more about how you can get involved and to download your event pack.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Talking Café Live

At a recent Talking Café, Mendip Agent Bella Lapwood was joined by Stewart Weston from deafPLUS to talk about their service helping those with hearing difficulties. Please [click here](#) to watch a replay of the talking café Live.

REMINDER- Free Workshop 'A Long Road Back From Lockdown'

This workshop is due to be held on **Tuesday 11 May at 10am – 12pm** and will be an interactive meeting, part presentation, part discussion. The CCS ask all attendees to participate fully by using both sound and camera so that everyone can see who is speaking. The discussion will focus on the implications of the 4 step roadmap out of lockdown for community buildings, and how to ensure that all buildings are COVID-19 secure. It is an opportunity for hall trustees to ask questions and share experiences or concerns around reopening their halls.

Please [click here](#) to read full details and to book your place.

Visit Exmoor and Visit Somerset

Reopening Guide – Free Webinar

Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership FREE Digital Online Training Programme
A Quality Reopening Guide - Is Your Business Ready?

This 1-hour session will walk businesses through the considerations that need to be undertaken in preparation for the proposed re-opening of the sector on the 17 May. All businesses in the visitor economy are encouraged to attend. After the seminar, participants will have access to re-opening risk assessment documentation and planning template and will also be invited to join the Visit Exmoor/Visit Somerset Associate Member Programme.

This webinar is being brought to you by Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership (HTAP) in collaboration with Somerset County Council, Somerset West & Taunton District Council and North Devon Council.

The webinar date is: **Thursday 13 May 2021 at 11am**. Please [click here](#) to register. Spaces are limited, please register early.

Health and Welfare

Care homes residents allowed more out-of-home visits

Residents are now able to leave care homes for low-risk visits without needing to self-isolate on their return. All care home residents will now be able to participate in more out-of-home visits without having to isolate on their return. Residents are able to leave their care homes to visit a friend or family member's garden, or go on walks in places such as parks, public gardens and beaches. They will not have to self-isolate when they return.

Residents must be accompanied by either a care worker, or nominated visitor, and follow the government guidelines of washing hands regularly, keeping social distance, and remaining outside, in line with [step 2 of the roadmap](#).

The changes come as the data shows cases continuing to fall, meaning it is now much safer for care home residents, who are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19, to leave their homes. Keeping visits outdoors will ensure any risk is minimised as much as possible.

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

Assisted rapid testing for people without symptoms of COVID-19 now available in local pharmacies

People in Somerset now have access to assisted COVID-19 testing as the county takes another important step in the roadmap out of lockdown. Somerset's Director of Public Health is encouraging everyone to access free, regular, rapid COVID-19 testing. This regular testing is for people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and is important because it helps to find cases which would otherwise go unidentified, as well as contributing to the process of identifying and suppressing new variants of concern.

So far, 19 Somerset pharmacies have signed up to provide assisted testing, so if you have never used a Lateral Flow (rapid) test before, it is a great way to be shown how to do the test correctly. You can then collect kits and do the testing at home. Or this service might help those people who cannot perform the test on themselves for any reason, allowing them to participate in regular rapid testing.

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

Tests are freely available so please use them

Everyone in Somerset over the age of 16 can now get free rapid lateral flow device (LFD) COVID-19 tests and should be using them twice a week. These tests are important to do regularly because they detect people who are carrying COVID-19 but haven't got any symptoms, so could be spreading it unknowingly. The tests are quick and easy, and the results are usually back within an hour.

People are strongly advised to take at least one supervised test at a centre if you plan to do your regular, twice weekly testing at home. If you can't get to a centre, please [click here](#) to view a video that provides a great demonstration of the correct testing technique.

And please remember – if you are taking the tests at home it is very important for you to [log your results here](#). Please make sure that if you are symptomatic in any way take a confirmatory PCR test as quickly as possible.

The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms is delivered through:

- test sites across Somerset between set times. To find your nearest Somerset test collection site, please click trace.nhs.uk/ and enter your postcode.
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- a home ordering service, which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home. A pack of tests contains 7 tests. You can order one pack per household each day. [Please click here to order your rapid lateral flow tests.](#)

One dose of COVID-19 vaccine can cut household transmission by up to half

A new study by Public Health England (PHE) has shown that one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine reduces household transmission by up to half. Studies have already demonstrated that being vaccinated significantly reduces your risk of being infected.

[This new research](#) shows that those who do become infected 3 weeks after receiving one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccine were between 38% and 49% less likely to pass the virus on to their household contacts than those who were unvaccinated. Protection was seen from around 14 days after vaccination, with similar levels of protection regardless of age of cases or contacts. This protection is on top of the reduced risk of a vaccinated person developing symptomatic infection in the first place, which is around 60 to 65% – 4 weeks after one dose of either vaccine.

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

Latest Vaccination data for Somerset

You can 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.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

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

Need to seek help?

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:

- 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)

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

[Public Health England](#)

[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

Q. Is protection instant after I've been vaccinated?

A. Protection from any vaccine takes time to build up. In general, the older you are the longer it takes. It will take at least two weeks in younger people and at least three weeks in older people before you can expect to have a good antibody response. Even then, you must return when called for your second dose. Vaccines offer important protection to reduce risk but they do not make you invincible. No vaccine offers 100% protection against any disease.

Crime / Safeguarding

National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

FluBot: Guidance for “package delivery” text message scam

The NCSC is aware that a malicious piece of spyware – known as FluBot – is affecting Android phones and devices across the UK. The spyware is installed when a victim receives a text message, asking them to install a tracking app due to a ‘missed package delivery’. The tracking app is in fact spyware that steals passwords and other sensitive data. It will also access contact details and send out additional text messages – further spreading the spyware.

The text message requests that victims click a link. Doing so directs them to a scam website. Users of Android devices (such as those manufactured by Google, Huawei and Samsung) will be encouraged to download an app.

Users of Apple devices are not currently at risk, although the scam text messages may still redirect them to a scam website which may steal your personal information.

If you receive a scam text message:

- Do not click the link in the message, and do not install any apps if prompted.
- Forward the message to **7726**, a free spam-reporting service provided by phone operators.
- Delete the message.

If you were expecting a DHL delivery, you should visit the official DHL website (track.dhlparcel.co.uk) to track your delivery. Do not use the link in the scam text message.

For more advice and guidance please [click here](#).

Reminder- SWT Scam Alert

Callers targeting areas in the SWT District claiming to be working for the Council are falsely promising loft insulation grants on agreement of a home visit. Neither SWT nor any nominated contractors are making calls of this nature. If in doubt, check with SWT by calling **0330 304 8000**.

Reminder- The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund – Phase 2

The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund aims to support projects that use sport and physical activity to reduce violence, crime and anti-social behaviour. This fund is for projects that focus on using activity as a tool to engage and support young people up to the age of 25. More information can be found [here](#).

Deadline for applications is **17 May 2021**.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing

On Sunday 2 May police units from both Avon and Somerset, and Devon and Cornwall police, were out and about on Exmoor. Both police teams were responding to concerns around people using vehicles off-road illegally in the National Park. Persons using vehicles off-road without permission from the land owner are committing offences. In addition, much of the Exmoor National Park area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and have enhanced protected status.

To increase the areas which can be checked, Avon and Somerset now have the ability to use a drone, which means that large areas can be covered in a short time. The drone will also be a great help when looking for missing or injured persons, across the District.

Taunton Neighbourhood Policing

Over recent weeks the PCSOs have been out in Blagdon Hill and Bishops Hull supporting the local Community Speedwatch teams.

If you would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer for Community Speedwatch in your area, please [click here](#) to find out more.

Wellington Neighbourhood Policing

During the Bank Holiday weekend, the PCSOs were conducting patrols in the local parks following reports of anti-social behaviour. They spent some time engaging with those in the park who were enjoying the sunshine and are pleased to report there were no issues.

In recent weeks as lockdown restrictions have been relaxed there has been an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and criminal damage in the Park, the Basins and in other areas of Wellington where groups of youths gathering have caused criminal damage to flower beds, street furniture, shelters and more.

The Police are working in partnership with SWT to identify those responsible and will be contacting schools and youth groups across Wellington to ensure all young people understand that this behaviour will not be tolerated and if anyone is seen, named or identified causing damage to the park or in any other area of the town then action can and will be taken against them.

Please call 101 if you witness ASB or a crime taking place in your community.

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.

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air